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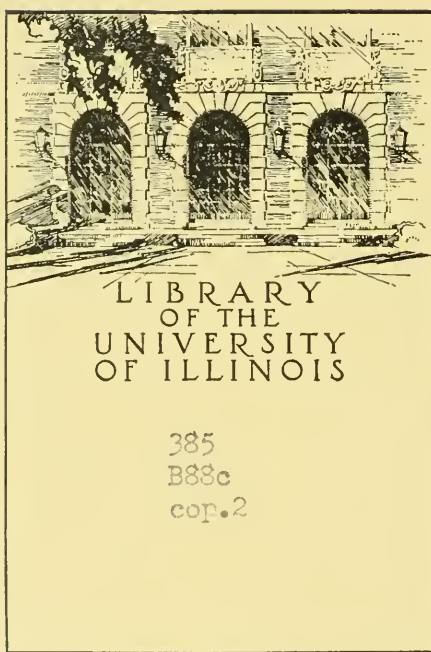
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C.C. BURFORD

THE CHATSWORTH WRECK:

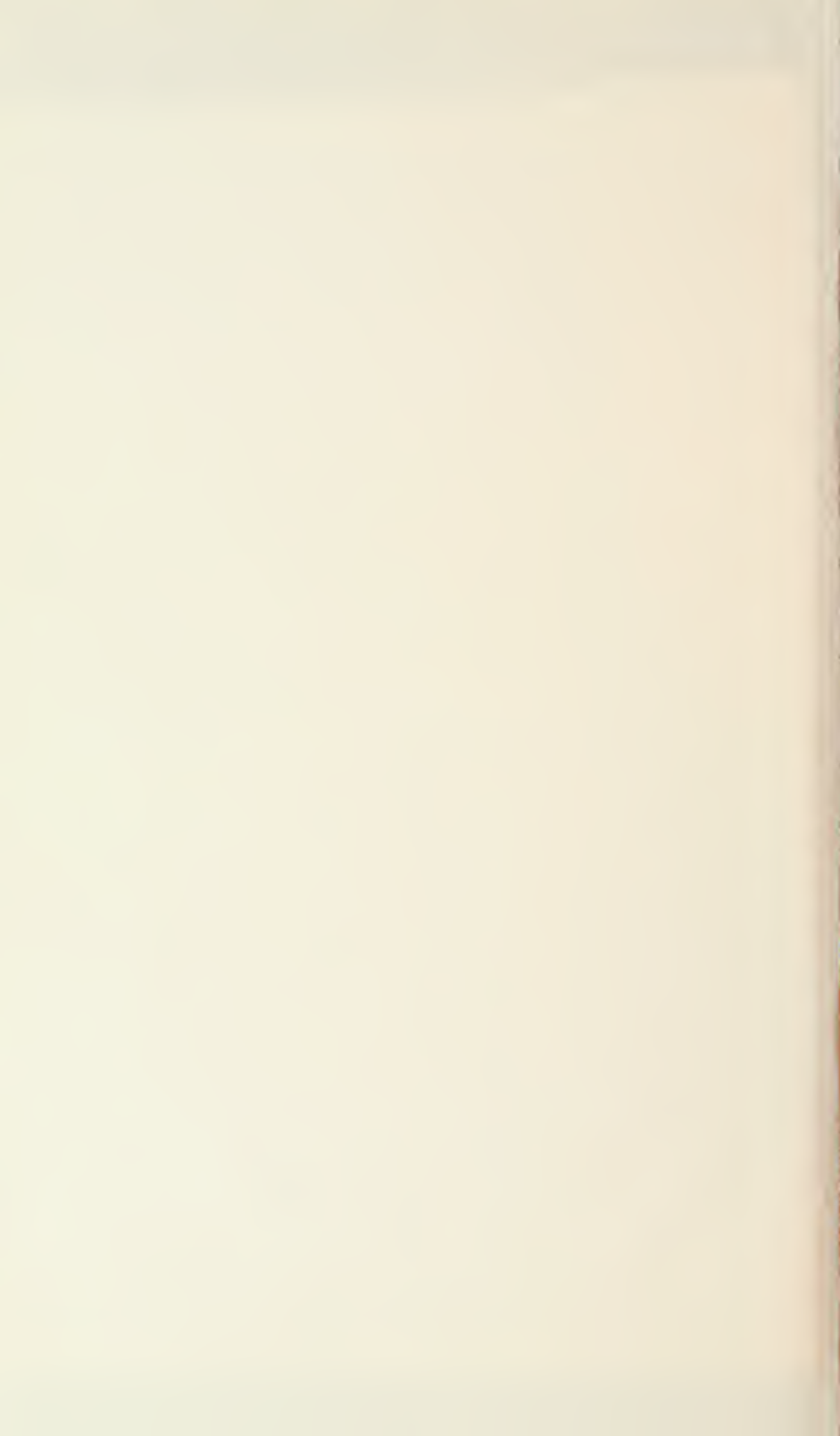
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(1949)



Illinois Historical Survey





The Chatsworth Wreck



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NOVEMBER 1, 1949
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AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Line Drawing on the Front Outside Cover of this book is the work of Jean Devaud, Bradley, Ill., a student in the College of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Illinois, November, 1949.

THE CHATSWORTH WRECK

A SAGA OF EXCURSION TRAIN
TRAVEL IN THE AMERICAN MID-
WEST IN THE 1880s.

By Cary Clive Burford
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CONTENTS

Introductory Note	3
T., P. & W. Depot, Chatsworth, Ill., Its History	4
"The Bridge Was Burned at Chatsworth," in Song and Poetry	5
Chapter One—Disasters and Their Historical Importance	6
"The Lady Elgin," Another Tragedy Embellished in Poetry	7
"Always Be Careful"—The Slogan of This Volume	9
Chapter Two—The T., P. & W. Railroad, Its History	10
Chapter Three—Communities Served by the T., P. & W.	14
Keokuk, Iowa, Warsaw, Hamilton, Canton, Ill.	14
T., P. & W. Sponsors Towns on Its Eastern Extension	16
"The Campbell House," El Paso, Ill., Its History	17, 19
Abraham Lincoln and the T., P. & W.	18
"The Campbell House," Historical Plaque	20
Picture of "The Campbell House"	21
Fairbury, Forrest, Chatsworth, Piper City, Ill.	19, 22, 23, 24
Old-Time Passenger Trains on the T., P. & W. Railroad	24, 25
Chapter Four—The Romance of Old-Time, Popular Low-rate Excursion Trains	27
Niagara Falls Excursions	32
Chapter Five—The Fatal T., P. & W. Excursion Train	33
Chapter Six—The Zero Moment, Midnight of August 10-11, 1887, The Crash	35
Map of Central Illinois, Showing T., P. & W. Railroad	42, 43
Chapter Seven—Aid and Succor at the Wreck Site for "The Wounded"	44
Pictures of the Wreck	37, 39, 45, 47, 49, 55, 83, 84
Chapter Eight—L. J. Haberkorn and His Experiences at the Wreck	50
Picture of L. J. Haberkorn	53
Chapter Nine—Newspaper Coverage of the Wreck	54
Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph, and Its Famous "Scoop" Story	59
Picture of William McCambridge, Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph	59
Facsimile of Pantagraph's "Scoop Story" of the Wreck	61
Newspaper Sidelights Upon the Chatsworth Wreck	62
Wreck Recalled Annually by Contemporary Newspapers	64
Chapter Ten—Interviews With Persons Who Recall the Wreck	66
Chapter Eleven—The Last Round-Up—The Final Reunion of Survivors of the Wreck, Chatsworth, Ill., August 12, 1937	70
Picture of Group of Last Survivors, at Final Round-Up	71
Chapter Twelve—Summary of the Major Railroad Wrecks in the United States	73
Chapter Thirteen—Synopsis of Ashtabula, Ohio, Wreck, December 29, 1876	75
Chapter Fourteen—Conclusion	79
And Now—Two Drain Tile Instead of Timber Bridge	79
Memories From the Golden Years of Yesterday	80
Salutations and Greetings to American Railroads	82
"Always Be Careful"—The Life You Save May Be Your Own	82

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Release

Historical Society

This volume, a study of railroad travel and especially of old-time excursion trains, in the Central West in the 1880s and the 1890s, has two objectives.

We wish to portray, as accurately and as fully as possible, also as vividly, the events which led up to the Chatsworth Wreck, the tragedy itself, and the aftermath of suffering, death and national shock which the accident caused.

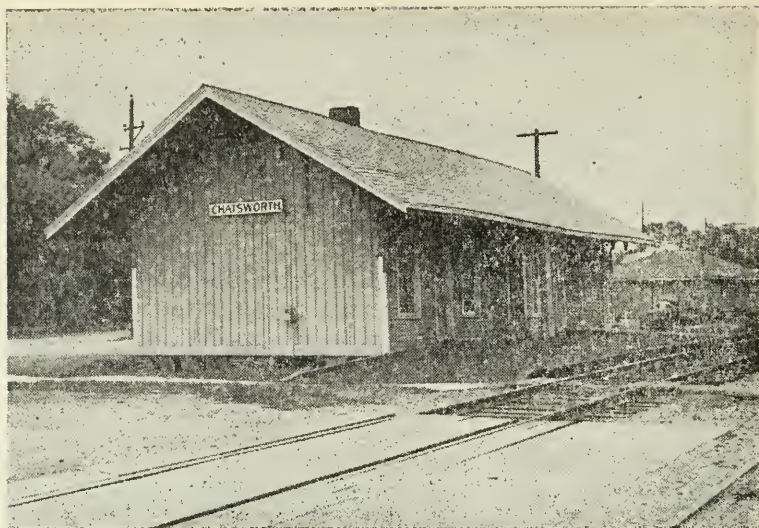
But—far more important—we have endeavored to picture the transportation life of the people of the Central West in a period when they depended almost solely upon trains for their traveling, and especially upon local passenger trains and special excursion trains.

The railroads then supplied practically the only means by which the people in towns and small cities and upon farms in the Central West could relieve the tedium of their village or rural life.

We have desired a similar recapture of those doubtless gone—forever railway traveling years preceding and following the turn of the present century which this author and Guy McIlvain Smith, Danville, Ill., his co-author, pictured in our "History and Romance of Danville Junction," a 1943 volume.

If this writer has succeeded in bringing to the people of 1949 and 1950 a glimpse of the happiness and the hazards of old-time railroad traveling, on old-time excursion trains six decades ago, we will feel assured that our labor on this volume has been abundantly rewarded.

C. C. BURFORD,
907 South Orchard Street,
Urbana, Illinois.



THE T. P. & W. DEPOT
Chatsworth, Illinois
Same Building — Same Site
A Morgue, August 11, 1887

The T. P. & W. depot in Chatsworth, Ill. This is the same depot in service which stood on the same site in 1887, according to L. J. Haberkorn, Chatsworth, Ill., who led the first relief group to the site of the wreck, the night of August 10-11, 1887.

This depot served as a morgue the next day after the wreck. Bodies were assembled there for shipment to their homes. Guards were posted around the depot to keep the curious and idle away, while members of families of deceased identified, or tried to identify, their dead.

Note the word "Chatsworth" on the east end of the depot. The word "Chatsworth" became a household term in Illinois, the Central West and the United States following the tragedy. Even today, people who were not born in 1887, but who heard their elders discuss "The Chatsworth Wreck," know the name of this town

L. J. Haberkorn, Chatsworth, recalls having seen 22 dead bodies lying upon

the platform at this depot the day after the wreck.

Stretchers Hastily Made.

Mr. Haberkorn told this author that three elderly carpenters, who were not able to walk to the wreck, began work on improvised stretchers for the dead and injured brought from the wreck-site itself. They took pine boards 12 feet in length, one foot in width and one inch in thickness, cut them through the center, making two boards six feet in length and placed them together side by side. They put strips under each end and in the middle, and then cut hand holds on each side, making a stretcher of each of them. The dead and injured or "wounded" were placed upon these hastily built, but useful, stretchers, and loaded into cars, and transported into Chatsworth. Many dead bodies, in such stretchers, reposed in front of, and beside, the above railway station. The three carpenters made over 100 of these stretchers.

THE BRIDGE WAS BURNED AT CHATSWORTH

By T. P. Westendorf.

Published by the John Church Co.

Philadelphia, Pa.

1. From City, Town and Hamlet,
They came a happy throng
To view the great Niagara
With joy they sped along.
The maiden and her lover,
The husband and the wife
The merry prattling children
So full of joyous life.

Chorus:

But oh! how much of sorrow,
And oh! how much of pain,
Awaited those who journeyed
On that fated railway train.

2. With hand upon the lever
And eye along the track
The engineer is standing
While shades of night are black.
They pass the town of Chatsworth,
And rush into the gloom.
Ah! could some power have
stopped them,
E'er they had reached their doom.

3. For see! the smoldering embers
That lie along the ridge,
Ah, God in pity save them,
It is the railroad bridge.
Too late to turn the lever,
Too late to stop the train,
Too late to soothe the sorrow
Too late to ease the pain.

4. A mighty crash of timbers
A sound of hissing steam,
The groans and cries of anguish,
A woman's stifled scream.
The dead and dying mingled,
With broken beams and bars
An awful human carnage,
A dreadful wreck of cars.

5. All honor to the heroes
Who flame and fury fought
All thro' that night of horror,
A glory dearly bought.
As over land and water,
This thrilling message crossed:
"The bridge was burned at Chatsworth,
A hundred lives are lost."

A Poem—A Song—Folklore

The above song, or poem, might well be considered "The Theme Song" of the great Chatsworth Wreck.

It was sung by children, young people and adults for many years after 1887. It was used as a "piece," or a song, for Friday afternoon school exercises or on "the last day of school" programs. The Chatsworth Wreck so impressed the people of the Central West that they made it not only a part of their history, but of their folklore as well.

We are indebted to several friends for copies of this song, especially to Miss Faye Shafer, Chatsworth, Ill., and to Judge Claude U. Stone, Editor and Publisher, The Peoria Star, Peoria, Ill., and to others. The Chicago Sun-Times published this song in Milburn P. Akers' column, October 4, 1949.

It appears elsewhere, of course.

There is no copyright on this poem. By authority of the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, September 27, 1949, copyright has expired. We have the same information from the Theodore Presser Company, Music Publishers, Bryn Mawr, Pa., successors to the John Church Company.

T. P. Westendorf is thought to have written both the words and the music, according to the Presser Company. He was quite a well known composer and song writer. He wrote the song, "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen," which still has a large sale.

(Author's Note: No attempt is made at this point to review the heroic and Good Samaritan work of the people of Chatsworth and other nearby towns in rendering aid to the injured.

THE CHATSWORTH WRECK

CHAPTER ONE

Wrecks, Fire, Floods, Other Disasters and Their Historical Importance in the Central West.

Unfortunately, disasters such as fires, floods, explosions, wrecks and other forms of death and loss, are a part of the vast panorama of history in the Central Western states, as, indeed, they are in all parts of the United States.

Regardless of our disapproval—and certainly we do not like them—these disasters with their tremendous costs in life, health, strength and property are an important chapter in our historical records.

Railroad wrecks, in all areas of the United States, have taken staggering tolls of human life and well-being and much property, both corporate and individual.

One of the greatest of all railroad wrecks in our nation—if we are willing to construe “greatest” in terms of human life — was the famous Chatsworth Wreck on the night of August 10-11, 1887, on the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad, about three miles east of Chatsworth, Ill., when a heavily loaded Niagara Falls excursion train crashed into the burning debris of a timber culvert bridge while running at a high rate of speed.

There have been numerous serious railroad wrecks in all parts of our beloved country. As a people we have demanded speed and we have urged prompt and efficient service, as a responsibility of railroad officials. America has been growing and developing at a tremendous rate. We have paid for our greater speed with many railroad disasters.

Motor Mishaps.

But the railroad industry must not be criticized for all of our tragedies. Our modern highways in 1949 are tak-

ing an increasing, and a sickening, toll of human life and strength and of physical property. Readers of our contemporary newspapers grow discouraged while reading the myriad of items reflecting automobile collisions and other forms of motor mishaps on our highways. We do not, in this treatise, include data and statistics on this type of disasters as our readers, most unhappily, are entirely familiar with these daily tragedies. Fortunately, we have noted in the summer of 1949, a slight decrease in the number of automobile fatalities and accidents in the United States. May this improvement continue—please Allah.

Bus and truck disasters increase with the greater number of these useful vehicles on our highways. Buses and trucks are heavy. When wrecks befall them, the loss of life and property is certain to be impressive.

Tragedy In the Air.

Air disasters continue, with great loss of life. Most unfortunately, few persons, comparatively speaking, who are passengers or crewmen or women in planes, live to survive a crash. If there are 45 persons aboard a plane which runs into difficulties then the death toll is almost certain to be 45. Few live to relate the story of a major air crash.

Another major air tragedy occurred November 1, 1949, when two planes, one an Eastern Air Lines DC-4 passenger ship, collided with a P-38 fighter plane as each aircraft was attempting to make a landing at the Washington, D. C., airport. A total of 55 lives were taken, including two infants, four crew members, and many notables, including at least one or more members of Congress. Several other prom-

inent men and women were aboard the passenger ship, which was destroyed with all on board.

THE LADY ELGIN, THE EASTLAND

The wreck of the Lady Elgin, a passenger steamer on Lake Michigan, off Evanston, Ill., September 7, 1860, was one of the tragic mishaps on our beautiful Great Lakes, one of Nature's most beneficent gifts to Man in the Central West. There were 300 lives lost. (1)

"Lady Elgin" Disaster Also Cast Into Verse and Song.

Milburn P. Akers, columnist of the Chicago Sun, now the Sun-Times, published September 7, 1947, an interesting column story on the wreck of the "Lady Elgin," passenger craft on Lake Michigan, which went down with loss of almost 300 passengers.

"Lost on the Lady Elgin."

Out of that disaster came the 19th century classic, "Lost on the Lady Elgin," a typical Victorian poem that was set to music, and sung for many years thereafter.

The Rev. Edward J. Dowling, S.J., writing in the current issue of the

(1) "The Wreck of the Lady Elgin," by Dwight F. Clark, Evanston, Ill., President, Illinois State Historical Society, 1948-1949, Journal of the Society, Volume XXXIX, 1946, pages 407 seq.

Also note article, "The Wreck of the James Watson," Illinois State Historical Society, Volume XXXVII, 1944, pages 213 seq., "being a Civil War Disaster, the wreck of the Vicksburg Memphis packet, James Watson," carrying government freight, a large number of passengers and 80 soldiers sank in the Mississippi River, below Napoleon Landing, the morning of March 2, 1865. Thirty lives were lost, including the Adams Express messenger, 20 soldiers and several ladies and children. Officers of the boat were mostly saved. The steamer and cargo were a total loss."

Illinois State Historical Journal, recalls not only the disaster but the song that commemorates it as well.

Lost on the Lady Elgin.

Up from the poor man's cottage,
Forth from the mansion door,
Reaching across the waters,
Echoing 'long the shore;
Caught in the morning breezes,
Borne on the evening gale,
Cometh a voice of mourning—
A sad and solemn wail.

CHORUS

Lost on the Lady Elgin,
Sleeping to wake no more;
Numbered with that three hundred
Who failed to reach the shore.
Oh! 'tis the cry of children
Weeping for parents gone;
Children who slept at evening,
Orphans, awoke at dawn.
Sisters for brothers weeping,
Husbands for missing wives,
Such were the ties dissevered,
In those three hundred lives.

Staunch was the noble steamer,
Precious the freight she bore,
Gaily she loosed her cable
A few short hours before.
Grandly she swept our harbor,
Joyfully rang the bell,
Little thought she ere tomorrow,
'Twould toll so sad a knell.

This song, like "The Bridge Was Burned at Chatsworth," became a part of the song background, one might also say, the folklore music of the post-Civil War period.

The Lady Elgin, named for the wife of a Canadian governor, had brought a large group of Milwaukeeans, principally from the city's old third ward, to Chicago for a political rally.

Leaving Chicago the night of September 7, 1860, for the return trip, the Lady Elgin encountered rough weather. Somewhere near the Illinois-Wisconsin line, probably off Waukegan (some writers say off Evanston) she was rammed by the schooner Augusta, and sank.

"Many lost their lives on the spot," so Father Dowling writes. "But others found safety amid the floating wreckage, especially the upper deck covering which Captain Jack Wilson had ordered to be chopped loose. A majority of the survivors floated safely on this makeshift raft, only to meet death in the heavy surf at the shore line at Winnetka. Captain Wilson died with his passengers."

In the lobby of the Northwestern University gymnasium there is a memorial tablet to a Garrett Biblical Institute student, Edward Spencer, who became the hero of the occasion.

"Strong and courageous," says Father Dowling, "he braved the waves to swim out and rescue 17 people before he fell exhausted."

Milwaukee, whose citizens constituted the bulk of those lost in the Lady Elgin disaster, annually recalls the tragedy with memorial services at the city's St. John's Cathedral.

Eastland Tragedy.

The Eastland tragedy, when this Great Lakes excursion craft tipped over in the Chicago River, as she was about to depart on a day's joyful journey, July 24, 1915, terminated the lives of 812 persons. Significantly, this vessel did not sink. Overcrowded, with many people rushing to one side of the boat, the vessel simply turned over on its side in the Chicago River, with certain death for hundreds submerged beneath the water of the stream.

Tragedy In Industry.

Industrial accidents and disasters are important in our American economy. Coal mines, unfortunately, are frequent sources of deaths and injuries. The Cherry, Ill., mine disaster, November, 1909, took a toll of 270 lives. The Centralia, Ill., mine tragedy March 25, 1947, was one of our most serious mine disasters, with loss of 211 lives.

The Iroquois Theatre Fire, December 30, 1903, was one of our most costly theatre disasters, with a death rec-

ord of 602 lives, with many more injured.

Other Disasters.

River floods along the Mississippi, Ohio and Illinois rivers have been serious, but the total loss of life has been widely distributed through many communities. However, there has been great suffering and much loss of property at points such as Shawneetown, Ill., Paducah, Ky., Beardstown, Ill., and many other towns and cities when Old Man River has run amuck on his wild caprices.

The last place of all for heavy death toll might seem to be in a hospital, yet the fire which destroyed St. Anthony's Hospital, Effingham, Ill., April 5, 1949, was the cause of about 80 lives being lost—this was the nation's most serious hospital fire.

No attempt can possibly be made in this brief recapitulation to enumerate all, or even a major or a minor portion, of the various disasters which have arisen, in one form or another, in transportation, industry or amusement in our Central States alone.

Caution—Be Careful.

Suffice the matter to emphasize that caution must continually be our watchword. Industry, traffic, the rush for amusement, and the increasing mechanization of man's tools, including farm implements, bring mankind to that certain rendezvous with Death. And if Death itself does not intervene, then injuries to life and limb and loss of property are the inevitable result of Man coming into collision with gigantic forces of Nature which he cannot—even in these scientific days of 1949—control.

Death takes no holiday. This observation runs true to form—with no exceptions. Whether we travel by railroad train, or by bus or boat, or by privately owned and operated automobile, or whether our duties take us into the fields of grain, or into shops and factories and warehouses,

or into the realm of wholesome sports and recreation, we must allot full 100 per cent attention to that slogan, now so universally proclaimed by our railroads and industries:

"ALWAYS BE CAREFUL"

Death on the Night of August 10-11, 1887.

Death certainly rode the rails on that summer night of August 10-11, 1887, when a T., P. & W. passenger train, rushing through the darkness towards Niagara Falls, became a burning horror of wreckage near Chatsworth, Ill. Under the tonnage of two locomotives and many heavily loaded coaches, a blazing timber culvert collapsed and those wooden cars splintered and piled high, one upon another.

The night was made hideous with the cries of the injured, or "the wounded," as contemporary newspapers used the term, for it was only 22 years after Appomatox. The Civil War was still grimly and vividly recalled.

The hundreds of injured were taken to neighboring towns, and eventually to Peoria, Ill., where impromptu hospitals were speedily — perhaps clumsily, even if lovingly—prepared to care instantly, as best they could, for the gigantic task so immediately at hand.

The dead were laid out in rows upon the bosom of the fertile Illinois prairie. Later, they were removed to nearby towns and eventually to their home

communities for their last long sleep.

The night was horrible. Succeeding days with increasing fatalities were certainly as deplorable.

Yet this event was an important historical episode in the story of American transportation. It should be told. It should be—it must be—preserved as surely as Carl Sandburg and other able historians relate the sufferings of the American Civil War — without doubt our greatest internal American disaster.

Gettysburg and Vicksburg and Petersburg are never pleasant, albeit they are most important. These and other battles and campaigns in our Civil War are being studied today as they have never been before.

Disasters—yes, even great wars — should teach us something of the frailty of Man. From these regrettable events, Man may be able to improve his future. He should—certainly he has cast some blots upon his record in the past.

The Chatsworth Wreck, the third most costly in human life in American transportation, can teach us many lessons.

Above all, and over all, in the conduct of American industry, and highway and other forms of traffic, and our daily life in general, the Chatsworth Wreck can impress upon us the need for attention to that important slogan, let us

"ALWAYS BE CAREFUL"

CHAPTER TWO

The Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad, the Railroad of the Famous Chatsworth Wreck.

Following an almost direct east-west route across the State of Illinois — from Effner, Indiana, on the Illinois-Indiana state line to the Mississippi River, at Hamilton, Ill., Warsaw, Ill., and Keokuk, Iowa—a distance of 239 miles, the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad is correctly evaluated as one of the important freight arteries of the nation.

This railroad connects the most important freight lines of the East with those of the West, thus affording quick and efficient transcontinental cargo movements on a far-flung national scale.

The T., P. & W. today, as in past decades, is the "Outermost Outer Belt Line" of the Chicago area. By-passing all of the Chicago and Northern Indiana vast industrial areas, the T., P. & W. connects Eastern trunk lines such as the New York Central and the Pennsylvania with Illinois main lines of the Chicago and Eastern Illinois, the Milwaukee System, the Illinois Central, the Wabash, and the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio (or the Alton Route) with the great railroads of the West and the Far West, including, of course, the Burlington, the Santa Fe and the Rock Island.

While the T., P. & W. itself does not serve a city larger than Peoria and the general Peoria industrial area, it connects with roads which enter and serve all the great cities of the nation, from New York to the Pacific Coast.

Passenger Service Discontinued.

Passenger service was discontinued on the T., P. & W. Railroad in 1927. Many of the passenger stations of the T., P. & W. were joint or union stations with other roads, as with the New York Central at Sheldon, the C. and E. I. at Watseka, the Illinois Central at Gilman and El Paso, the Wabash at Forrest and Fairbury, the

Alton at Chenoa, and the Santa Fe at Eureka, to mention these on the eastern end of the road. Such union station arrangements were ideal for the traveling public. Many of these union stations are still used by the connecting line, as at Sheldon, Watseka, Gilman, Chenoa and Eureka. Those at Forrest, Fairbury and El Paso have been removed, although the T., P. & W. maintains a convenient freight depot at Fairbury.

Beginnings of the T., P. & W. Railroad.

The absolute genesis of the present T., P. & W. Railroad at least in concept and long distance planning, may be traced to the years 1836-37, according to the History of Peoria County, published by Johnson and Company, Chicago, 1880, where on page 528, we note the following:

"Considerable grading was done on what was called the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw railroad in 1836-37, but not a mile finished. The people were both displeased and disgusted and for a number of years railroad building rested."

Thus were the beginnings of the present T., P. & W. railroad halted. The railroad, at least in the late 1830s, seemed to have died aborning.

Origin of Other Illinois Railroads.

However, Lady Luck smiled upon the construction of "The Northern Cross" railroad which was begun at Meredosia, Ill., on the Illinois River, in the same year, 1837. Ties and rails were actually laid upon grading—insecure enough—with no ballast whatever. A tiny locomotive was purchased from the Baldwin Works in Philadelphia. This engine reached Meredosia by the all-water route—down the Delaware River from Philadelphia, out into Delaware Bay and the Atlantic Ocean,

through the Gulf of Mexico, and up the Mississippi and the Illinois Rivers—to be finally unloaded from an old-fashioned steamboat at the waterfront of the pioneer village of Meredosia in 1838—just five years after a young, ambitious, future statesman by the name of Stephen A. Douglas—who was later to make Abraham Lincoln truly great—had reached that same village in the spring of 1833.

This diminutive locomotive which actually arrived at Meredosia was not the first one purchased by the hardy railroad builders in Illinois. The earlier one, caught in an Atlantic gale, went down with its ship. It is today resting (what remains of it) on the bottom of the sea with the fabled **McGinty**.

But the engine which was placed in service at Meredosia was definitely untrustworthy. Its roadbed was miserable—it often slipped from the rails—that is, thin strips nailed to long pieces of timber. There were no mechanics in the Central West who knew, or who pretended they knew, anything about steam locomotives. The tiny little puffer was out of repair and out of service much of the time. Horses—more to be relied upon as motive power—were often used. But, undaunted by these handicaps, the builders of the Northern Cross pushed on their task, slowly but certainly. Jacksonville was reached in 1840, Springfield in 1842.

The Young Mr. Lincoln: His First Railroad.

This was the first railroad which Abraham Lincoln—"The Young Mr. Lincoln," then 33 years of age, knew. Danville was not reached until 1856—railroad building was indeed slow and tedious—but the pioneers did their work well, when all of their manifold handicaps are taken into consideration. Our railroad promoters in the pioneer period made a valiant beginning. By 1860, there were numerous railroads operating in Illinois—including the T., P. & W. from Peoria to the Illinois-

Indiana state line—but the guns of the Civil War halted all railroad construction for several years. Yet the Northern Cross—if we except a short coal mining road, with horses as the sole motive power, in the East St. Louis area—was the absolute beginning.

First Rails for Chicago.

Chicago secured its first rail service in 1848—hence the Centennial of the Chicago and Northwestern railroad in 1948—through the construction of the historic Galena and Chicago Union, now a part of the vast Northwestern System. True enough, only ten miles were placed in service in 1848, but a bold start had been made, a beginning which was to transform Chicago into the greatest transportation center in America and in the world. The Galena and Chicago Union was also built with wooden rails capped with thin straps of iron.

The first locomotive used in the Chicago area was "The Pioneer." It was conveyed, very naturally, over the all-water route from the east to the front yard of Chicago. There, it was unloaded from a lake schooner and dragged over muddy and rutty streets by teams of stout horses to the end of the rails. There it was placed into service to bring all of the Great West and Northwest into the lap of Chicago. It seems that horses had their definite part in the building of our early rail lines.

Our Real Interest—In the T., P. & W.

Tempting would it be, in truth, to relate, even most briefly, the origins of other old rail lines, as we have sketched the mere outlines of the Northern Cross, now the Wabash, and the Northwestern railroads. The beginnings of the present Rock Island, Burlington, Baltimore and Ohio, Illinois Central, Alton (now absorbed into the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio) and New York Central Lines in Illinois and in the Mid-West are just as fraught with historic episodes of major importance.

But our interest lies in the origin of the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad. (1) The Illinois General Assembly February 12, 1849, gave a charter to the Peoria and Oquawka Company to begin a railroad, to extend from Peoria on the Illinois River to Oquawka on the Mississippi River—a logical rail connection, indeed, between the waters of these two navigable streams. The charter was amended February 10, 1851, to include a branch to Burlington, Iowa, or at least to a point opposite Burlington as there was no bridge spanning the Father of Waters at that time. Burlington, a larger place, was held to be a better terminal for the road, which would then be 93 miles in length.

The stockholders met June 20, 1851, at Knoxville, Ill., and organized under the charter, which was amended June 22, 1852, to extend from Peoria to the Illinois-Indiana state line.

The western half of the road was "completed" in January, 1857, from Peoria to East Burlington. We must always use the word "completed" with a dash of salt, for a railroad is never

completed. The grade, the ballast, the rails, which bear the flights of the Twentieth Century Limited, the Rockets, the Zephyrs, The Green Diamond, The Chief, The Abraham Lincoln, in 1949, are not "completed," never will be "completed." Afterwards, a branch line was built leaving the main line at a point nine miles east of the Mississippi River for the five miles extension into Oquawka.

"The company became financially embarrassed"—how frequently do we read this dismal observation in the study of pioneer railroads. The infant railroad was sold under foreclosure to the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company, which operates it today from Peoria to Galesburg, Galesburg to Burlington, and Oquawka to Burlington.

Eastern Extension of the T., P. & W.

The eastern extension of the Toledo, Peoria and Western railroad was begun in the summer of 1853, and finished to Gilman, Ill., 86 miles from Peoria, by September, 1857. This portion of the road includes the scene of the Chatsworth wreck. The remaining mileage from Gilman to the state line was completed by December, 1859.

There were mortgages, of course, on this part of the road and these were foreclosed. A new company was formed which was named the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw Railroad Company.

In 1867, the newly formed company began to build, once again, a western extension, the first one of which had been sold to the Burlington, as noted. The line from Peoria to Warsaw, Ill., and Keokuk, Iowa, was finished in October, 1868. A branch was built in 1871, from La Harpe, Ill., to Burlington, Iowa.

Citizens of Peoria, Ill., subscribed for \$250,000 of stock of the company in the late 1860s. The people of Peoria felt differently towards the railroad than their earlier generation who

(1) Author's Note: This brief review of the history of the T., P. & W. railroad does not, in any respect, pretend to be a complete history of this railroad, so intimately associated with the pioneer railroad construction period in Illinois and the Central West.

This sketch is presented only to indicate the historic importance of the T., P. & W. A full volume would be required to do justice to this interesting chapter in Illinois pioneer transportation construction and operation. Likewise, our comments upon other early railroads in Illinois are included only as sketches of the growth of railroad building in Illinois and adjacent states. Again, it would require many volumes to amply portray the history of any one of the pre-Civil War railroads in Illinois and into surrounding states

had been "displeased and disgusted" in 1836-37.

Indeed, the same history of Peoria County states that "the road has been a grand feeder to Peoria and a promoter of her commerce and growth and may be styled, emphatically, "the Peoria Railroad." The Peoria County historian in 1880 was indeed forecasting the future, for, in 1949, or approximately 70 years later, the T., P. & W. is called "The Peoria Road" and its locomotives recently carried this slogan. Jovially, through the years, especially when the road carried a heavy passenger traffic, it was known as "The Tip-Up."

Important Passenger Business.

Comment may well be interjected at this point to note the really important passenger business which the T., P. & W. handled from about 1870 until 1927. There were four passenger trains daily each way between Peoria and Forrest, two each way daily between Forrest and Effner. Practically every station on the eastern extension was a sizeable town—East Peoria, Washington, Eureka, El Paso, Gridley, Chenoa, Fairbury, Forrest, Chatsworth, Piper City, Gilman, Crescent City, Watseka and Sheldon. There were important T., P. & W. passenger trains, with union stations as previously noted, at many of these points, connecting with other railroads. Connections for Chicago were made at Chenoa and Forrest especially, also at Gilman, Watseka and Sheldon. The Tip-Up in what might be called the good old days,

really handled passengers — "good loads" as trainmen designate their coaches filled with passengers. And there was many excursion trains—notably the Niagara Falls excursion which made railroad history the night of August 10-11, 1887, when it plunged into the dry stream of a tiny creek after the burning culvert bridge had fallen.

Later History of T., P. & W.

Octave Chanute, for whom Chanute Field, now Chanute Air Base, Rantoul, Ill., was named, was a leading civil engineer, and was one of the active forces in the building of the eastern extension of the railroad.

Through a special act of the Illinois general assembly, dated February 21, 1861, the corporate title of the Peoria and Oquawka Railroad Company was changed to the Logansport, Peoria and Burlington Railroad Company. The property was conveyed to the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw Railway Company May 14, 1864.

Following a period of receivership, beginning January 20, 1875, the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw Railway Company was sold at foreclosure January 20, 1880, and was acquired by the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad Company May 20. Thus was the name "Warsaw" dropped from the corporate name of the company. The company continued operation under this name until reorganized July 1, 1887, as the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railway Company. Note the change in substituting "Railroad" in favor of "Railway."

CHAPTER THREE

Communities Served by the T., P. & W. Keokuk, Hamilton, Carthage, Oquawka, Canton.

Keokuk, Iowa.

Keokuk, "The Gate City" of Iowa, and suggestively, entrance to the great Trans-Mississippi country, from which the frontier vanished decades ago, is important in our story, for it was from Keokuk, or from Hamilton, Ill., opposite Keokuk, and from Warsaw, Ill., a few miles down the river, that the Peoria and Oquawka Railroad, later to become the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw, or the Toledo, Peoria and Western, under various names and through diverse reorganizations, was eastward extended.

Keokuk was named for the Sauk and Fox Indian Chief, Keokuk, who was known by the Indians as Puk-e-she-tuck, which meant "Where the water runs shallow," and which became known as Keokuk. He was a friend of the White Man and tried to avoid the Black Sparrow Hawk war campaigns of 1831 and 1832. His statue is now located atop a hill in Rand Park, Keokuk, with his Indian countenance forever surveying the Father of Waters.

Keokuk received its first railroad service in 1856 and is now served by the Burlington, Rock Island, Wabash and T., P. & W., the last three having only freight service at present into the Gate City.

Platted in 1837, Keokuk had an even earlier history as an American trading post as early as 1829. By the 1840s it had become an important trading center. A canal was constructed around the rapids in 1877. The famous Keokuk Dam was built 1910-1913, and is about a mile in length, extending to Hamilton, Ill., and furnishing electric power to a wide area.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, who was later to become famous as Mark Twain, as a journeyman printer in

Keokuk prior to the Civil War, served under his brother, Orion Clemens. One record has it that Samuel Clemens crossed the river and worked for a brief period as a printer in Warsaw, Ill., (see comment on Warsaw).

Hamilton, Ill.

Situated at the eastern end of the famous Keokuk Dam, Hamilton, Ill., is, and was, the extreme western terminal, on a straight line, of the T., P. & W. railroad, excepting its river skirting line from Hamilton to Warsaw, about five miles to the southwest.

Hamilton is the gateway city to reach the old Mormon memorials at Nauvoo, Ill., about 12 miles up-river. The drive, Illinois Route 96, between Hamilton and Nauvoo, skirting beautiful Lake Keokuk—a widening of the Mississippi River, caused by the Keokuk Dam—is one of the most scenic and picturesque not only in Illinois, but throughout the Central West.

Hamilton is the home of the century-old industry of Dadant and Sons, one of the largest beeswax producers in the United States. The founder of the company came from France and established the business in a small way, as were so many now thriving industries. The beeswax produced by the Dadant company is used, very largely, for candles in religious services, chiefly Roman Catholic, throughout the world, as much of it is exported.

Carthage—Nauvoo—Oquawka.

None of these three richly historic communities in extreme Western Illinois is served by the T., P. & W. railroad, hence may seem to form no part of this present narrative.

At one time, what was projected as the T., P. & W., was to have been built through Carthage, and former residents of that city, who were born

and reared there, have told this author that bits of grading and roadbed, destined for what is now the T., P. & W., are still visible at Carthage.

Days might be spent in historical and literary research in Keokuk, Hamilton, Warsaw, Nauvoo, Carthage, other communities at, or near, the beginnings of the present T., P. & W. railroad.

From this general area, many persons went aboard, as passengers, the ill-fated Niagara Falls excursion train, which ran into such colossal havoc just after it passed through the small town of Chatsworth, Ill. After all, those fine communities at the fountain-head of the T., P. & W. are part and parcel of the tragedy to which this book is dedicated.

Canton.

The largest and most important city on the western end of the T., P. & W. railroad is Canton, aside from Keokuk, Iowa, a prosperous manufacturing community. Canton is the largest city in Fulton county, which at one time included all of the area north to the Wisconsin state line, including Chicago. In pioneer Illinois history, Chicago people looked upon Lewistown, the county seat of Fulton county, as their county seat.

Canton early became known as "The Plow City," for like Rock Island and Moline, it was an early center for the manufacture of agricultural implements. At present these industries employ about 3,000 persons, with a current building and improvement program involving \$3,000,000.

There is much coal mining in Canton area, most of it so-called "strip" mining, with a few "slope" mines. Strip mining, is and has been, always important in Canton vicinity. Electrically driven shovels remove coal from strip mines to a depth of 75 feet. It is then hauled in powerful trucks which cost \$20,000 each to tipples for railroad shipment. More than 2,000,000 tons of coal are produced annually.

Canton is so named, it is said, because its founder, Isaac Swan, entertained the belief that its site was exactly opposite, on the globe, the ancient city of Canton, China. Swan, in the pioneer days, gave a building lot to each settler who would locate there. Canton, Ill., today has population of 15,000 and is one of the finest and most prosperous cities in the general area between Peoria and Quincy, Ill.

Warsaw, Ill., Truly Historic.

Warsaw, a picturesque little city on the Mississippi river, a few miles below Keokuk, Iowa, was forecast as a future important city. Warsaw drew many interesting and capable people. William H. Roosevelt, a great-uncle of former President Theodore Roosevelt and a great-great-uncle of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, ascended the river from St. Louis, while studying the Central West for a location, and decided to build his mansion in Warsaw. This house was erected in the grand manner with large grounds, and with winding drives leading to stables. It was a prominent feature in the pleasing Warsaw background.

In 1839, Dr. Charles Hay, father of John Hay, who was to serve as one of two of Lincoln's private secretaries during the Civil War and later as Secretary of State and as Ambassador to Great Britain, moved to Warsaw when John Hay was a small boy. From Warsaw, John Hay went to Pittsfield, Ill., to attend a private academy since discontinued, where he lived with his uncle, Milton Hay, thence to Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. In Pittsfield, John Hay met John C. Nicolay, the future chief secretary to Lincoln during "The War Years," and through this friendship Hay was selected as second secretary to aid Nicolay. "Let Hay come along" was the crisp statement made by Lincoln when Nicolay suggested the need for additional secretarial help.

Following his Brown University graduation in 1857, John Hay returned

to Warsaw. Within a year or two, in 1859, he went to Springfield, Ill., to study law under his uncle, Milton Hay, who had removed to that city. In Springfield, again, Hay was thrown into company with Nicolay and with Lincoln. Hay's subsequent life is a part of our national history.

Two of the old homes occupied by the Hay family in Warsaw were preserved for many years. One stately Hay mansion, with great three-story porches overlooking the Mississippi, has been razed. An earlier home stands as a portion of a contemporary home. The old brick school, which the youthful John Hay attended, is, however, happily preserved and in 1949 is the headquarters of the local American Legion.

A Hancock county history tells us that Mark Twain, who worked at the printer's trade in cross-river Keokuk, Iowa, was employed for a short period as a printer in Warsaw.

Fort Edwards, at Warsaw, erected in 1814 as an outpost against the Indians, was named in honor of Ninian Edwards, first territorial governor of Illinois. There was an even earlier fort a mile down the river. The present Fort Edwards State Monument stands within easy walking distance of the business district of Warsaw. This monument, overlooking the confluence of the Des Moines River with the Mississippi River, is preserved by the Illinois State Division of Parks and Memorials.

Warsaw lies a few miles south of Keokuk, Iowa, and indeed, west of Keokuk, with Warsaw in Illinois and Keokuk in Iowa. The river swings off to the southwest between Keokuk and Warsaw, with the smokes of Keokuk to be noted to the northeast of Warsaw. The Des Moines River enters the Mississippi just above Warsaw and from the heights at Fort Edwards State Monument, one can see three states, Iowa, Missouri and Illinois.

Warsaw, at one time, was selected

for the future extensive shops of the T., P. & W. Railroad, and there was much brisk building and active trade in Warsaw. The city, today, is one of the most delightful in Illinois, both historically and scenically, but the population remains at the approximate 2,500 mark. The T., P. & W. has a freight line entering Warsaw which skirts the bank of the Mississippi. This line leaves the Keokuk branch at Hamilton, Ill., five miles northeast of Warsaw and opposite the great Keokuk Dam.

While Warsaw did not become the great railroad terminal which was forecast, its name was a part indeed, of the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw Railway Company, which was merged with the Mississippi and Wabash Railroad Company, December 14, 1865. The Mississippi and Wabash was chartered February 10, 1857. However, the name of the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw Railroad Company was retained after this merger.

T., P. & W. Sponsors Towns on Its Eastern Extension.

The towns along the entire extension of the T., P. & W. between Peoria and Effner are "railroad towns." They were platted by town builders, like Patton and Chanute, who laid out new town sites along the new railroad. Patton, Chanute, others were, in reality, empire builders of the first order. In their far-ranging vision of the future they saw, perhaps, in only a rudimentary way, "A Vast Future," as Abraham Lincoln once expressed his glimpses of the years to come. Lincoln was able to compress so many great truths into so few words. Such men did humbly, yet finally and dramatically, forecast the vast America of which we are proud today.

Traveling the T., P. & W. from Peoria to Effner, one notes the business sections of all the towns, without exception, grouped closely about the tracks of the old-time "Tip-Up." This fact demonstrates the truth that these towns followed the railroad. Eureka,

El Paso, Gridley, Chenoa, Fairbury, Forrest, Chatsworth, Piper City, Gilman, Crescent City, Watseka and Sheldon have packed their business districts snugly beside the tracks of the T., P. & W. Few of these towns even existed before the coming of this railroad, although Eureka was the older Walnut Grove, and Watseka the pioneer Middleport, each of which was moved to almost trackside of the T., P. & W.

Illinois railroads, including, of course, the T., P. & W., aided profoundly in transforming a once Illinois wilderness into one of the richest Garden-Spots which the Creator ever fashioned. One has only to survey the agricultural resources of the Fairbury-Forrest-Chatsworth area to realize that the Corn Belt of Illinois is one of the marvelously fertile regions of the entire United States. Certainly, the men who built the T., P. & W. railroad and who platted the many town-sites chose wisely in their laudable ambition to extend a railroad entirely across the State of Illinois at its widest point.

Unfortunately, this area, so rich in agricultural resources and so fraught with business growth and development, proved the region where one of the greatest railroad tragedies in the United States occurred — the Chatsworth wreck. Railroad history was made, but not the railroad history which we esteem so highly. However, it was an historical episode of the first magnitude.

The era of the Chatsworth Wreck was included in the period when all traveling, beyond the trotting ability of Old Dobbin and Old Betsey, was done by passenger trains and by local passenger trains, for the most part.

A trip to Niagara Falls, in the good old summer time, on a typical excursion train, was a vacation which was highly regarded. This was a cherished event, a journey which relieved the

tedium of farm work and small town life as few other sojourns could do.

Small wonder, then, that hundreds of people clambered aboard a special T., P. & W. excursion train enroute the entire distance from the Mississippi River towns to Chatsworth, for the joyful trip to the enchanting and mysterious Niagara Falls. This trip, undertaken in the most gala vacation spirit, was never completed, for Disaster overtook the train, causing "The Chatsworth Wreck" to become truly historic.

The Campbell House at El Paso—A Landmark on the T., P. & W.

Erected in 1863, as a combination hotel and railroad passenger station, the Campbell House, at the junction of the T., P. & W. railroad with the old main line of the Illinois Central at El Paso, Ill., was one of the many such hostelries in Illinois and the Central West.

Some of these combined hotels and depots were located along "the Chicago Branch" of the Illinois Central as the line from a point north of Centralia, Ill., to Chicago was known. The old Doane House at Champaign, Ill., which burned in 1893, and the Essex House at Mattoon, Ill., were among these, as were hotel-stations at Effingham, Ill., and Centralia, Ill.

At many junction points there were hotels and restaurants either within the stations themselves or in close proximity. Danville Junction, Ill., for instance, was the focus for four hotels, several restaurants, bars and barber shops during the Roman holiday of the glory and importance of mass local passenger train travel at that historic old cross-roads of the Central West. The depot hotel dining room and the depot lunch-counter, with their heavy and massive cups and saucers and plates, are recalled by old-time travelers.

George H. Campbell built the Campbell House in El Paso. He also served

as agent for the two railroads. Campbell had served as agent at El Paso since 1858, and noting the trend towards railside hotels, erected his combined hostelry and railroad station. It is said that he maintained the cleanest waiting-room along the lines of the two intersecting railroads at El Paso. At the peak of the local passenger train movement, there were 12 passenger trains daily, or at least six days a week, which stopped at his hotel-station—truly a "Roadside Tavern" of the Civil War period. He later leased his hotel to other parties.

The Campbell house was razed in rather recent years. There is an appropriate historical plaque at the railroad junction in El Paso, where the hotel once stood, with a brief, but impressive historical review of the old-time hostelry which once graced the railroad intersection, when all travel beyond a few miles, was done by local passenger trains and when a "change of cars" at a point like El Paso was taken for granted. And it should be recalled that patrons of railroad hotels were not bothered in their slumbers by the whistles and bell-ringing and noise of locomotives and of trains swishing across a railroad junction. It was, indeed, a privilege for many travelers to "stop" at such a hotel and to meet their fellow-travelers, much as the group met at "The Wayside Inn," as depicted so delightfully by the American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Abraham Lincoln and the T., P. & W. Railroad.

Paul M. Angle, secretary of the Chicago Historical Society and former secretary-treasurer and editor of the Illinois State Historical Society, in his authoritative "Lincoln, 1854-1861, Being the Day-by-Day Activities of Abraham Lincoln from January 1, 1854, to March 4, 1861," makes only one direct reference to Lincoln using the Peoria & Oquawka Railroad, as the T., P. & W. was known in those pre-Civil War years.

Angle (page 243) reports Lincoln changing from the old main line of the Illinois Central to the Peoria & Oquawka at El Paso, Ill., Saturday, August 28, 1858, while enroute from Freeport, Ill., where the second Lincoln-Douglas Debate was held Friday, August 27, to Peoria. Lincoln had a wait of one hour at El Paso between trains. As soon as it became known he was in town a crowd gathered and he spoke for a few minutes. From Peoria, Lincoln went to Pekin, probably by steamboat on the Illinois River, and then to Tremont, Ill., then county seat of Tazewell county, where he spoke for two hours on Monday, August 30.

Both Lincoln and Douglas spoke in Peoria, Monday, October 16, 1854, these addresses being commemorated today by historic tablets at the Peoria County court-house. However, according to the map in the Angle "Day-By-Day" volume, Peoria in 1854, had no railroad. Lincoln had been in Pekin on previous days and went to Lacon, Ill., the day following the Peoria speech, doubtless making both trips by steamboat. There is little, if any, direct evidence that Lincoln used the Peoria & Oquawka railroad on other occasions.

Towns in the Wreck Area.

Mention has been made of picturesque Warsaw, which with Keokuk, Iowa, and Lomax, Ill., form the western terminals of the T., P. & W.

Once again, it is tempting to spend much time in a review of the many interesting towns and cities along the T., P. & W.

Our chief interest, however, lies in the communities in the area of the Chatsworth Wreck of August 10-11, 1887, and these towns are Chatsworth, Piper City, Forrest and Fairbury. These four communities were the nearest allied to the great tragedy which is our real theme of discussion.

PLAQUE RECOGNIZED IN HISTORICAL JOURNAL

"A bronze Plaque marking the site of the old Campbell House in El Paso, Ill., was unveiled November 1, 1939, by the American Legion. Many people prominent in the early history of the state have been guests at the old Campbell House, which was built in 1833, and razed in 1938. General Grant was host at a reception there in 1880 and General John A. Logan is known to have stayed at the hotel when he was in El Paso."—Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Volume XXXII, December, 1939, page 53.

With the exception of the above brief item in the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, the Campbell House has never been recognized, it is believed, outside of El Paso and vicinity. The third generation of the Campbell family is now living in California.

Mark Twain at The Campbell House.

C. C. Kingdon, cashier, Woodford County National Bank, El Paso, Ill., who prepared the material for the Campbell House plaque, wrote the author of this volume, October 23, 1949:

"One guest deserving historical note was a young lecturer who signed the register January 12, 1849, and remained overnight. In one of the Campbell House rooms, the young lover-lecturer wrote one of his 'Loveletters.' We did not know this fact when we double-checked the data for the historical plaque. The letter, with the dating and place by Samuel Langhorne Clemens, the future Mark Twain, was published in the Atlantic Monthly, November, 1948. Only the dateline mentions our then budding town of El Paso, Ill."

Fairbury.

To Octave Chanute goes much of the credit for the early surveys and platting of the city of Fairbury, the most important center in southeastern Livingston county.

Indian Grove township, in which

Fairbury is located, has a long history identified with the American Indian. There were pioneer White settlements in and near Avoea. The first name at least assigned to what is now the city of Fairbury was South Avoea. Caleb L. Patton, a stockholder in the original Peoria and Oquawka Railroad, and Chanute, a prominent civil engineer of his period, were instrumental in the location of the present town-site of Fairbury. There was much rivalry among the early residents, especially between those of the "east end" and the "west end" as to which would be the real center of the community. These jealousies have long since been buried by the ever vigilant hand of Father Time.

"The railroad was built in 1857, running east and west through the center of town. It is a great trunk line between East and West. There are few roads at the present time in the State of Illinois that are doing such a heavy business." (1)

Fairbury really entered railroad history in 1873 with the building of "The Chicago and Paducah Railroad," which has since been absorbed into the Wabash System. This railroad, which has become only a branch line, with freight service only, in 1949, of the Wabash, was projected southeasterly from Streator, Ill., through Pontiac and Fairbury, crossing the T. P. & W. at the western edge of Fairbury, where it continued southward towards the general vicinity of Paducah, Ky. However, Effingham, Ill., was the farthest south terminal ever reached. Today, the road does not extend beyond Sullivan, Ill., with freight service only, Eement, Ill., to Sullivan.

(1) Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Livingston County, edited by Christopher C. Strawn, Percyce B. Johnson and George H. Francis, Volume II, page 345, Munsell Publishing Co., Chicago, 1909.

"THE CAMPBELL HOUSE"

On this site from 1863 to 1938, stood "The Campbell House," a famous old hostelry and railroad depot. Built by George H. Campbell and operated almost continuously by him and his son, Harry, until 1917.

General U. S. Grant held a reception here on Monday, April 19, 1880, and General John A. Logan on October 6, 1872, and many other notables were guests at other times.

Major Louis Baron Chlopicki, noted Polish gentleman and exile, operated a restaurant one block south of here from 1856 to 1867, near the depot of that era. He died in 1867, and is buried in Evergreen cemetery nearby.

David A. Stiother voted in the city election, Monday, April 4, 1870, the first legal Negro vote cast in the United States.

The first Illinois Central train passed here May 16, 1853. The first T., P. & W. train in 1856 brought lumber for El Paso's first store building erected one block east of here by William H. Jenkins.

James H. Wethen and George L.

Gibson platted the town April 20, 1854. It was incorporated as a city in February, 1867, and was reorganized under the general law in 1891.

Plaque erected in 1939 by El Paso Post No. 59, Inc., The American Legion.

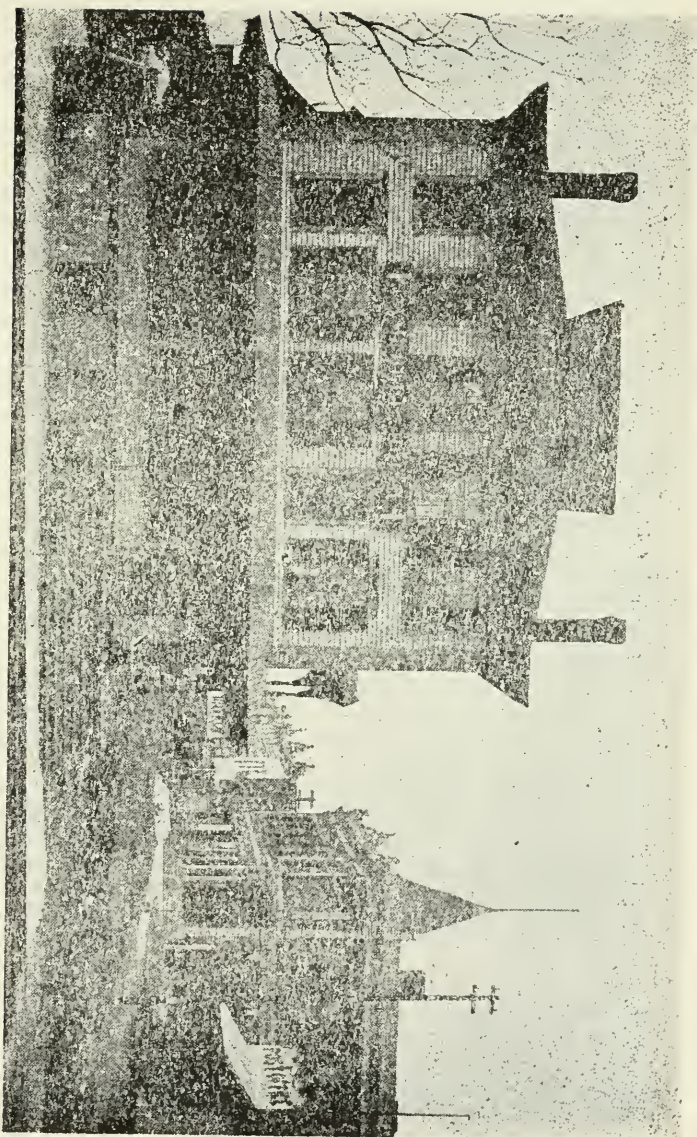
(Author's Note: It is difficult to check the exact dates of railroad depots in El Paso. The Campbell House was erected in 1863 and was used for many years as a joint ticket office and passenger depot by both the T., P. & W. and the Illinois Central. Yet we read, on this plaque, there was a depot, one block south of the intersection, which was used from 1856 to 1867. These dates overlap by four years, probably cannot be accurately checked today.)

It could be that the Illinois Central operated its own depot south of the intersection until 1867 and then moved to the Campbell House. It might be that the hotel, erected in 1863, according to the plaque, was not used as a railroad ticket office and waiting-room until 1867, at least by both railroads. This is an interesting problem for local historians in El Paso to study.)

"The life-story of Louis Chlopicki, mentioned on the tablet of the Campbell House, will interest readers of this volume. I wrote it up for an El Paso newspaper several years ago. Unfortunately, I have no copy of it now, and we have only the copy in the files of the newspaper itself. Isaac Jenkins, old-time citizen of El Paso, now deceased, carried much information concerning this Polish citizen's strange

existence in El Paso and his even stranger death."—C. C. Kingdon, El Paso, Ill.

Abraham Lincoln, known to have "changed cars" at El Paso, August 28, 1858, and who might have been at El Paso on other occasions, did not know the Campbell House, which as noted, was erected in 1863. Lincoln left Springfield, Ill., February 11, 1861, nevermore to return in life.



THE CAMPBELL HOUSE

Old-Time Hotel and Railway Station

The old-time Campbell House, at El Paso, Ill., was in no way connected with the Chatsworth wreck, although it was contemporaneous with that tragedy.

It is here included as a slice of American hotel operation and railroad ticket office when the two were combined at railroad junctions.

El Paso, Ill., 1863—1938

The Campbell House faced the east.

T., P. & W. trains stopped on its east or left-hand side; Illinois Central trains in front of the old hostelry. Note the steps by which passengers descended to take their trains. Also note "post office" at extreme right and the unpaved main street in El Paso.

The Chicago and Paducah.

Older generations in Illinois spoke of the present Wabash railroad from Bement, through Monticello, Gibson City and Forrest into Chicago as "The Paducah Railroad." Many railroads carried names of cities or areas which were never reached.

Illinois maps of the vintage of 1880 show "The Chicago and Paducah Railroad" extending south from Streator through Pontiac, crossing the T., P. & W. at Fairbury and joining "The Chicago and Mississippi," as the present Wabash from Chicago to Bement was known, at Strawn. Remnants of the old grade of the Chicago and Paducah are still to be found southeast of Fairbury and southwest of Forrest.

The present Forrest-Streator branch of the Wabash operated profitable passenger business for a number of years. Two or more round trips were made daily, or at least six days a week, between Forrest and Streator. Pontiac, the county seat of Livingston county, attracted many visitors from Forrest and Fairbury. While court was in session especially, those Wabash local passenger trains "picked up" perhaps 15 or 20 passengers each morning both at Fairbury and Forrest, discharged that many each evening. Those were the years when the local passenger train was in the hey-day of its prosperity and popularity. All of this business faded, of course, with the coming of modern highways and these Forrest-Streator passenger trains were discontinued.

The Livingston county history tells us there was an old-time hotel and depot serving both the T., P. & W. and the Chicago and Paducah, in the west part of Fairbury, where the two railroads then crossed, and where, at present, the Streator branch freight trains creep onto the T., P. & W. as tenants to continue their five mile journey into Forrest which is their terminal.

Indian Grove and Fairbury people

responded heartily to the building of the Chicago and Paducah railroad, even more so than they did to the construction of the Peoria and Oquawka, now the T., P. & W.

"The people of this section (Fairbury) seem to have awakened to the necessity of extended railroad facilities, since the building of the T., P. & W., as it, we are informed, encountered much opposition from the very inception of the enterprise until its success and energy won for it a degree of independence, while the Chicago and Paducah received a hearty and substantial support and a stock subscription." (1)

It is strange, indeed, that many Illinois and Central Western communities actually opposed the construction of pre-Civil War railroads and even after that conflict, and permitted new railroads to "miss" them or to by-pass them slightly. Many present-day "Ghost" towns in Illinois owe their demise to the neglected opportunity of allowing a railroad to build past them or near them rather than through them.

Forrest.

Forrest township received settlements as early as 1833, but the building of the T., P. & W. railroad through that area in 1857 gave rise to the village of Forrest, which was not incorporated until 1870.

The building of the present Wabash railroad between Decatur and Chicago in 1873 made Forrest a busy junction station. While the T., P. & W. operated passenger trains, Forrest was a well known point for "changing cars." It has always been a heavy interchange for freight between the Wabash and the T., P. & W. Its population is now about 1,000. Forrest was known as Forrestville in its early period.

(1) History of Livingston County, by Strawn, Johnson and Franzen, the Mundell Company, Chicago, 1909.

Forrest became a railroad division point when the Wabash railroad established a roundhouse, light shops and yards. This installation has steadily diminished during more recent years and Forrest is not the railroad terminal in 1949 which it was 30 or 40 years ago.

The Forrest-Streator branch of the Wabash railroad serving Fairbury and Pontiac has been treated under the comment on Fairbury, as in its early history, it was more identified with Fairbury than with Forrest.

Chatsworth.

The name of Chatsworth was given to the wreck, although it occurred about midway between that town and Piper City. The wreck happened within a few rods of the Livingston-Ford county line, but within Livingston county. The line between the two counties in that area runs north and south, as "The Panhandle" of Ford county extends far to the north, reaching Kankakee county. Ford county at this position is only one township wide, with Iroquois county on the east. Piper City is the only station on the T., P. & W. in Ford county, with Chatsworth, Forrest and Fairbury the only T., P. & W. towns in Livingston county.

Chatsworth today is a town of approximately 1,200 population. It has an excellent high school, several small industrial plants and a well built business center. Besides the T., P. & W. railroad, Chatsworth is served by the Kankakee-Bloomington branch of the Illinois Central railroad, which like the T., P. & W., maintains only freight service. This branch of the Illinois Central was projected as the Kankakee and Southwestern Railroad and was proposed at one time to run from Chatsworth to Gibson City and thence southwesterly to reach St. Louis. At Gibson City, it was to join the old Gilman, Clinton and Springfield railroad, which is now the route of the Chicago-St. Louis division of the Illinois Central. The Livingston County history,

in mentioning the construction of this road, says that "It is supposed the Illinois Central is the power behind the throne in the new road and will push it through to completion." Chatsworth was platted in 1858, the year following the completion of the T., P. & W. from Peoria to Gilman.

Piper City.

A townsite was laid out in 1867 on the Peoria & Oquawka railroad, then under lease to the Wabash railroad, in the Panhandle of Ford county, Ill., for Dr. William A. Piper, of Philadelphia, and Samuel Cross, of Chicago. The town was named, obviously for Dr. Piper.

Dr. Piper and John A. Montelius started a general store there almost immediately. Dr. Samuel C. Culbertson, a graduate of Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, located in Piper City in 1867, to practice medicine and to operate a drug store. John C. Culver, who had enjoyed some thrilling experiences with the "Pony Express" in the West and with Buffalo Bill, came to Piper City about that time and established a drug store. Mr. Montelius opened his bank in 1870, and later was in the grain business.

Piper City attracted an excellent class of citizens from Pennsylvania, New York and other eastern states. Presbyterianism was held in high repute in Piper City. The United Presbyterian church, founded by godly Calvinists from Ohio and Pennsylvania, was opened in 1869, and the Presbyterian church in 1872. This was one of three United Presbyterian churches in Ford and Vermilion counties, the other two being in Paxton and Hoopeston. The one in Paxton was united with the Congregational church to establish the Federated Church. There is a strong Presbyterian church in Piper City today.

Piper City, as it happened, was even nearer the wreck site than was Chatsworth, but Chatsworth was a larger town. Also, the train, east-bound from

Peoria, had reached and had passed through Chatsworth before the wreck occurred. The train, aside from its first locomotive, and that minus its tender, never reached Piper City.

However, the fine citizens of Piper City rendered every possible aid to the unfortunate victims of the wreck, some of the injured remaining days or even weeks with newly-found friends in Piper City.

Piper City has been distinguished through the years by a double Main Street, one north and one south of the T., P. & W. railroad. The depot is on the south side of the tracks, and the grain elevator on the north side. The stores on the north side face the elevator and those on the south side, which are more numerous, face the depot.

The Montelius Family.

J. A. Montelius came to Piper City from Central Pennsylvania in 1866. He was engaged to marry his sweetheart in that state and planned to bring her to Illinois within a few years. He prospered so much that he went for his bride in the fall of 1867. They lived their lives in Piper City. Mrs. Montelius missed so much the spring wagon which her father had driven in Pennsylvania. The father sent a two-seated spring wagon to his daughter and her husband as a gift in 1870. It was very much the classiest "rig" in Piper City and created wide interest.

The T., P. & W.—Its Passenger Service in 1916.

The Official Guide of the Railways of the United States, published in May, 1916, listed various interesting passenger train operations on the T., P. & W.

Peak of Passenger Business on T., P. & W.

The T., P. & W. operated four passenger trains daily eastbound from Peoria. The train at 7:10 a. m. arrived at Effner, Ind., at 11:10 a. m. A noon train, leaving Peoria at 12:30, ran to Effner, arriving there at 4:25 p. m. This train came from Keokuk, leaving

there at 7:00 a. m. Another train, leaving Keokuk at 2:00 p. m., left Peoria at 6:30 p. m. and ran to Forrest, arriving there at 8:45, and forming a T., P. & W.-Wabash movement between Peoria and Chicago.

In 1916, there were three railroads competing for the Peoria-Chicago passenger business, these being the Rock Island, connecting with the main line at Bureau, Ill.; the T., P. & W.-Alton movement through Chenoa, Ill.; and the T., P. & W.-Wabash trains through Forrest, Ill. A midnight train left Peoria at 12:01, arriving at Forrest at 2:22 a. m., and also formed a T., P. & W.-Wabash Peoria-Chicago connection. Still another train, daily except Sunday left Keokuk at 4:55 p. m. and arrived at Peoria at 9:22 p. m., terminating there.

Westbound T., P. & W.-Wabash trains left Forrest at 4:00 a. m. and 3:30 p. m., arriving at Peoria at 7:00 a. m. and 5:45 p. m. respectively. Westbound, also, trains left Effner, Ind., at 9:55 a. m. and 6:35 p. m., arriving at Peoria at 1:40 p. m. and 10:40 p. m. We fail to find listed a third train operating west-bound, on the west end of the road, from Peoria to Keokuk.

These train schedules provided four trains each way daily between Peoria and Forrest, and two each way daily between Forrest and Effner, Ind., also three trains between Keokuk and Peoria, granting there was an opposite train to the daily except Sunday leaving Keokuk at 4:55 p. m. and arriving in Peoria at 9:22 p. m.

Three connections are listed at Chenoa, Ill., daily between Peoria and Chicago, using the combined T., P. & W.-Alton affiliation. There were also three round-trips daily except Sunday between Hamilton, Ill., and Warsaw, Ill., with four movements between Warsaw and Hamilton, which is not possible in railroad operations, as there must be as many movements in one direction as in the other, to prevent accumulation of equipment at one end of the road. There was also

a round-trip daily except Sunday between LaHarpe, Ill., and Burlington, Iowa.

Heavy Passenger Business

The T., P. & W., in the palmy years of the local passenger train business, was a large carrier of both passengers and less than carload freight. Few railroads in the Central West did a larger strictly local passenger train business than did "the Tip-Up." The T., P. & W. served no large cities, aside from its connections through Chenoa and Forrest to Chicago. Peoria was the largest city served, with Keokuk second. But there were numerous thriving towns on the east end especially, such as Washington, Eureka, El Paso, Gridley, Chenoa, Fairbury, Forrest, Chatsworth, Piper City, Gilman, Crescent City, Watseka and Sheldon, with many of these having important railroad intersections, which provided a plenitude of local passengers. Canton, Bushnell, Blandinsville, La Harpe, Hamilton, Warsaw, contributed much business on the west end of the T., P. W.

The transfer of local passengers from one railroad to another, especially "changing cars," was an important factor in the early 1900s. This business has faded entirely from the rails with the overwhelming competition of automobiles and all-weather and all-year highways.

Its Excursion Business.

The excursion business was also a large item when all trips were made by train. The ill-fated Niagara Falls excursion of August 10, 1887, terminating in the Chatsworth Wreck, was only one of many operated not only by the T., P. & W. in the hey-day of local passenger train movements, but by many other lines.

Time brings its certain changes, especially on the rails. In railroad operation, there is nothing perpetual but change.

Difficulties of the T., P. & W.

The Chatsworth Wreck caused

claims of more than \$300,000 to be filed against the company, which at length went into receivership July 7, 1917. The road continued in receivership until purchased by George P. McNear, Jr., June 11, 1928, for \$1,300,000 at public auction. The title to the properties was transferred to the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad, April 1, 1927.

The labor difficulties of the T., P. & W. began December 28, 1941. The Federal Government seized the railroad March 22, 1942, as a vital war line and operated it under a Federal Manager until October 1, 1945, when it was returned to Mr. McNear.

The management of the railroad and the labor unions reached an agreement April 17, 1947, and the employees returned to work April 22, 1947.

J. Russell Coulter, formerly chief traffic officer of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway Company ("Frisco Lines"), was elected president of the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad, May 1, 1947, and a board of directors selected as follows: Henry E. Penny, New York City; Arthur D. Welton, Jr., Chicago, whose terms expire in April, 1950; J. Russell Coulter, Peoria, Ill.; Henry E. Kelley, New York City and George L. Luthy, Peoria, terms expire in April, 1951; and Thomas O. Hunter, Peoria, Ill.; and W. W. Vandever, Cleveland, Ohio, whose terms expire in April, 1952.

Officers are as follows: J. Russell Coulter, President and General Manager; Jay T. Hunter, Vice-President; H. H. Best, General Superintendent; T. B. Durfee, Comptroller; E. H. Gainnie, General Traffic Manager; J. J. Dailey, Superintendent Motive Power; H. H. Main, Chief Engineer; R. B. Gifford, Superintendent; L. Rider, Treasurer; and Thomas O. Hunter, Secretary.

Under the 1949 appropriations for federal improvements along the Illinois waterway in Illinois will be funds for the relocation of 4½ miles of the Toledo, Peoria and Western railroad

tracks to be completed in the spring of 1950, in the general East Peoria, Ill., area. This relocation will be a part of the improvement of Farm Creek, Cole Creek and Kerfoot Creek, and is designed to protect the East Peoria area from flash floods.

The McNear Family.

George P. McNear, president and principal owner of the T., P. & W. railroad in 1947, was shot from ambush March 10, 1947, while walking, at bedtime, near his home in Peoria. Mr. McNear died almost instantly. The tragedy attracted national attention. Even with the most modernistic detective and police methods, the assailant had not been apprehended to October 31, 1949.

James Graham McNear, 21, son of the slain railroad executive, met death August 17, 1949, while attempting to scale Mont Blanc, 15,781 feet in height, in the French-Italian Alps, at a point known as "The Giant's Tooth." This is the highest peak in Europe. He was accompanied by Dr. John Frederick Speck, 27, chemist, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Mich., who also met his death. McNear missed his footing, his rope broke, and he dragged Speck to the chasms below. Their deaths were the fifth and sixth to Au-

gust 17, in the 1949 mountain-climbing season, which has been reported especially treacherous.

Mrs. George P. McNear now resides in Milton, Massachusetts.

Adams Express on T., P. & W.

The T., P. & W. for many years, while operating passenger trains, carried Adams Express Company express. In the 1880s and 1890s, and even until the period of the First World War, there were many express companies operating in the United States, including the Adams, United States, American Pacific, Wells Fargo & Co., National, Southern, Northern Pacific, others.

Today, all railroads in the United States which operate passenger trains carry "Railway Express Agency," a company of coast-to-coast organization.

The old-time express companies still survive, in corporate form and one occasionally sees their names in financial and business news. But the individual companies, like the old Adams Express operating on the T., P. & W., Pennsylvania, Burlington, other rails, are now a chapter of history of an intensely interesting period of American railroading.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Romance of the Old-Time, Popular, Low-Rate Excursion Trains.

The period of low-cost, popular excursion trains and special trains forms one of the most picturesque eras in the fascinating story of American railroads.

While the "cheap" excursion trains, as they were so widely advertised years and decades ago, have faded from the rails, our railroad companies continue to operate many special trains to outstanding events, such as political conventions, presidential inaugurations, athletic events and particularly football games, and many fraternal and business gatherings of one type or another.

The special train or the excursion train of 1949 is usually a deluxe, super-elegant, or at least super-comfortable, train to some national conclave, as that of the Shriners or to a nationally important convention like the American Federation of Farm Bureaus of 1948, which thousands attended.

Excursion trains and special trains still operate to expositions, such as the Railroad Fair, Chicago, in 1948 and 1949, to football games, and to many other events with wide-spread appeal. Even these trains are usually of the deluxe or the fully comfortable type, with diners, fountains and bars and with Pullman sleeping accommodations, if the trip is overnight, for all passengers.

Special train movements to national political conventions and to presidential inaugurations continue to be operations of major importance, with such trains equipped with all the last-word comforts, perhaps even elegance, of travel luxury.

Low-cost is out of the picture today as railroad salaries and wages, as well as all purchases by railways, have soared so high that the old-time "cheap" rates are no longer possible. The types of coaches and Pullman

cars provided in 1949 are far superior to those of 50 or 60 years ago. Fares have sharply advanced, even round trips for the week-ends. For instance, the Illinois Central in 1903 sold round-trip excursion tickets Champaign, Ill., to Chicago for football games or week-ends for \$2. In 1949 the same week-end round-trips cost \$4.54, or more than twice the fare of 45 years ago.

Old type low-cost excursions from the Central West to the Pacific Coast and to other long distance points have vanished. Rates are quoted in 1949 which are considered low, with liberal privileges. Yet they are tremendously high in comparison with old-time low fares of \$4.75 or \$7.50 for the round-trip from Illinois points to Niagara Falls, as an example

The Public Loved Old-Time Excursions.

A half-century ago, the railroads afforded practically the only means of transportation. All railroads provided, and they advertised extensively, their "Low Rate" or their "Low Cost" excursion trains to many distant points including the West Coast and the East Coast and many points between.

Frequently, by payment of additional paltry sums, one could swing around in a circle. One man known to the writer bought a summer excursion round-trip ticket from Des Moines, Iowa, to Southern California. He found by paying only \$5 additional he could return through the Canadian Rockies—an offer which would be entirely impossible today. Some of these excursion fares were so ridiculously cheap 50 years ago they gave rise to the old-time quip that it was cheaper to travel than to stay at home. Such opportunities no longer exist.

Sunday Excursions.

Sunday excursions on special trains were operated for many years as "low rates, good for this day and date only"

by many railroads, to some central point where a baseball game might be enjoyed, or perchance a short jaunt taken aboard a lake or river steamer.

Such a travel program meant a full Sunday—a big Sunday—hardly a rest day at all, but one certainly packed with many types of recreation and of seeing sights for the man or for the family usually marooned in their home for the entire summer.

In the Central West, some of the focal points were Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Peoria and other centers which could be reached Sunday mornings by a special excursion train from many local points, with the return trip Sunday evening or Sunday night.

Such Sunday excursions left their origin at a really early hour, perhaps 6 a. m., and reached the city of their destination by 10:30 or 10:45 a. m., perchance an hour or two later if the excursion train were "late." The homeward trek was undertaken in the evening, leaving St. Louis or Indianapolis at 7 p. m. and depositing passengers in their town at 1 a. m. or 2 a. m., or later, if the train were running "behind time."

"Enjoy a full day in St. Louis" read many newspaper advertisements and also handbills issued by the railroad companies. It can be truthfully said that patrons of such excursions did spend a full day—albeit a hot, dusty, tiresome day in many instances. Such a long, hard day may have been "enjoyed."

\$1 Round Trip.

As for the cost of Sunday excursions, the Peoria and Eastern railroad, now under lease to the New York Central System, tied an extremely low price tag to their Sunday trips to Indianapolis from points as far distant as Peoria, Ill., and Bloomington, Ill. Fares from Peoria and Bloomington to Indianapolis were \$1.50 for the round-trip, with \$1.25 from Champaign, Ill., and \$1 from Danville, Ill. Indeed, it

did not cost much more to ride a Sunday excursion than to remain at home.

Sixteen car trains were frequently needed by this railroad for its Indianapolis excursions. Many roads used trains of ten, twelve, fourteen coaches on their Sunday excursion runs as a regular feature of their "service" to their patrons. In many cases the Sunday round-trip was far less than the one-way ticket. If the fare were \$3.50 from Champaign, Ill., to Indianapolis, the traveler might postpone his trip until Sunday — buy the round-trip ticket at \$1.25, and then sell, give away or tear up, his return coupon—and still be money ahead

The Majesty of the Silver Dollar.

The \$1 round-trip excursion was really a popular event, especially in the days when the silver dollar was king among coins. Silver dollars were pulled in by the score, at railway stations. The agent could not possibly put them into the till. Agents kept a tin bucket handy Sunday mornings when the excursion was leaving and tossed the silver dollars into the pail. The bucket was secreted over Sunday night in some remote nook in the baggage room. The agent then made a trip to the bank Monday morning with his pail, the journey being in someone's horse-drawn buggy or he would be given a ride by some jovial and whole-souled baggage wagon driver friend.

"Silver Dollar" Movie.

"Silver Dollar," as reflecting an intensely interesting historic period in our American past, was later made the subject of a motion picture, in which Edward G. Robinson took the stellar part and did it exceptionally well. Silver dollars have disappeared from our Central Western monetary media so nearly completely in 1949 that a silver dollar is actually a collector's item.

Religious Reaction Against Sunday Excursions.

In the days of intense religious emo-

tion, with old-time revivals and conversions, many pious people prayed earnestly over the sins of the Sunday excursions. The souls of both crews and passengers on Sunday excursions were remembered in the devotions of many church leaders who were deeply concerned over such profaning of the Lord's Holy Sabbath Day. But notwithstanding the criticisms of the religious groups, Sunday excursions, especially at extremely low fares, remained popular for many years. Such excursion trains did provide probably the only travel opportunity of the summer for untold hundreds of people who were otherwise more or less imprisoned on a lonely farm or in an equally lonely small town.

Low Summer Rate Excursions.

Besides the usual Sunday round-trip excursions many railroads operated various special forms of low-cost summer trip. Extremely popular in the land-locked areas of the Central West were the low fare round-trips to Put-In Bay, a beautiful and popular resort in Lake Erie off Sandusky, Ohio. Such rates were usually good for several days as were the \$5 or \$8 round-trip fares to Niagara Falls. Also popular were train-boat trips, with a ride on the Mississippi River from St. Louis or on the Illinois River at Peoria as a special feature of a week-end, or even of a Sunday. People living on farms or in small towns welcomed these opportunities to spend a few hours on lake or stream.

Political Excursions.

Campaign years in which a President was elected required many special excursion trains and rates. "Rallies" were held in important centers, frequently large cities or state capitals, such as Indianapolis, when the faithful of both the Republican and the Democratic parties would be conveyed by the trainload to march in a torchlight procession and otherwise do their bit towards saving the beloved republic through the election of their own party candidates.

In 1888 Grover Cleveland was the Democratic candidate for re-election as President of the United States with Benjamin Harrison as his Republican opponent. Joseph W. Fifer, Bloomington, Ill., was the Republican candidate for governor of Illinois.

Fifer was distinguished during the campaign as "Private Joe Fifer," in recognition of his services as a Civil War private soldier in contrast to the political ambitions of many army officers, or "generals," as they were called.

Illinois Republicans arranged a monster rally in Springfield to whoop it up for "Private Joe," who was, incidentally, elected. The Springfield rally, October 31, 1888, was one of the most spectacular ever held in the United States. It is said that 7,000 men marched in a torchlight procession that night. The parade was miles in length. Delegations came from all parts of Illinois—Young Republicans, First Voter Republicans, Chicago Fourth Ward Republicans, Marching Clubs, Zouaves, Fife and Drum Corps, a hundred and one groups, gaily and even gaudily attired, each man carrying a smoking and leaking kerosene torch to help carry the election within a few days for the Grand Old Party, and thereby assure the election of Republican candidates and the guaranteed saving of the United States of America. Today, with our radio political talks and our fireside chats we can with extreme difficulty envisage the tremendous political enthusiasm which attended political campaigns in the 1870s, the 1880s and the 1890s, just as we cannot understand the religious devotions of revival meetings, camp-meetings, experience meetings, love-feasts and other forms of religious expression in the days of the picturesque Illinois minister and presiding elder, Peter Cartwright.

Equipment for Political Excursions.

Railroads entering Springfield exhausted their equipment in providing transportation for several thousands

of Republican workers. Every old shell of a passenger coach which would remain astride the rails was pressed into service. Most hard-put was the Alton Railroad, then known as the Chicago and Alton, which served Bloomington, Ill., the home city of Mr. Fifer. (1) Hundreds of people milled about the Chicago and Alton station in Bloomington that day and evening seeking and even demanding train transportation to Springfield, 60 miles distant. In their desperation, Chicago and Alton officials ran out coal cars, placed planks across the tops for seats and used these for

(1) Former Governor Joseph W. Fifer, of Illinois, died in his Bloomington, Ill., home in August, 1938. He would have been 98 years of age October 28, 1938. He was truly one of the "Grand Old Men" of Illinois and the Central West. He came as a lad 16 years of age to the Bloomington area in 1856. He heard both Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas speak in the court house square in Bloomington. He and his brother George walked 10 miles from their home farm near Danvers, Ill., into Bloomington, in August, 1861, "when the corn had been laid by," to enlist in the 33rd Illinois Volunteer Regiment, commanded by President Charles E. Hovey, Illinois State Normal University, which was known as "The Schoolmasters' Regiment," as so many normal school students enlisted in this unit for service. George Fifer was killed in the siege of Vicksburg in the summer of 1863. Joseph W. Fifer was seriously wounded. Gruff army surgeons assured him he would not survive the night. "I'm not going to die—not this time." And he lived not only throughout the night, but 75 years thereafter. He was inaugurated governor of Illinois, January 14, 1889. A Republican candidate for re-election in 1892, he was defeated by his Democratic opponent, John Peter Altgeld, who, likewise, became one of the honored, picturesque and historic figures in our Illinois background.

coaches, to the delight of many partisans eager to march in the great torchlight parade that evening. Many Republicans rode the planks, some of them astride them for greater safety, for the trip to Springfield and return. Such forms of traveling would be impossible in 1949, but in 1888 were accepted with high glee by those unable to ride in any other equipment.

The Gold-Standard Campaign.

Another major political campaign which called for excursion train and special train movements on an unprecedented scale was the first McKinley-Bryan struggle for the Presidency in 1896. The astute Mark Hanna, Republican campaign manager, kept his candidate, William McKinley, at his home in Canton Ohio, and did not permit him to barnstorm the nation as did his rival, William Jennings Bryan, "The Great Commoner," "The Boy Orator of the Platte," the Democratic candidate, who traveled 18,000 miles in one of the greatest special train movements ever held in the history of American railroads.

McKinley staged his famous "Front Porch" campaign at his Canton, Ohio, home. The Mountain went to Mohammed instead of Mohammed going to the Mountain. Special train after special train at now considered ridiculously low excursion rates for their passengers, rolled into Canton that summer and fall. Only the books of the Recording Angel will ever reveal just how many people were conveyed to Canton, Ohio, to greet McKinley on his "Front Porch." Lawns of the McKinley home and of homes adjacent were worn dusty by the milling crowds. Without question, this campaign, both by the Republican and the Democratic parties, called for as extensive use of special trains as was ever experienced in American political history.

Football Excursions.

Football games in the 1920s also provided abundant opportunity for the use of special trains. The Illinois Central in the fall of 1925 operated 24 spe-

cial trains Chicago to Champaign, Ill., for the University of Chicago — the University of Chicago was then playing football with gala college spirit under the leadership of Coach Amos Alonzo Stagg, "The Old Man"—when "Red" Grange was "running wild" for Illinois. These trains left Central Station, 12th street, Chicago, every ten minutes for Champaign. Each train was named, "The Blue Train," "The Red Train," "The Green Train," "The Orange Train," et cetera, almost ad infinitum.

Football games still provide, even in the later 1940s, opportunities for special excursion trains, but it is doubted if any railroad in America is handling, or has ever operated within recent years, as many as 24 specials to any one game as Red Grange and his brilliance demanded in 1925.

Some railroads provided low-cost excursions for employees at some park during the summer. The Chicago and Eastern Illinois railroad operated, for a number of years, special trains for its employes for a day's outing at Island Park, on the Kankakee River, at Mokena, Ill. The Chicago Historical Society preserves a bill advertising one of these excursions which seemed open to the public as well as to employes.

Speaking of railroad companies operating special excursion trains for employees to attend summer picnics, the New York Central System, in the summer of 1949, operated special trains, or attached extra cars to regular trains for employees to attend the annual summer picnic given by the company. Other railroads may be doing this, or other similar plans, for a summer outing for the men and women in the service of the company.

The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904, each provided incentives for a tremendous patronage of special excursions.

Home Seekers—Home Visitors.

We should not overlook the "Home-Seeker" Excursions operated by numerous railroads in the 1890s and into the present century which conveyed many land-buyers and those seeking farms and homes in the Dakotas, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and other states newer than Illinois, Indiana and other more mature, and older states. There were also the "Home-Visitors" or "Old Home" excursions by which homesick Illinois, Iowa and Missouri residents were able to visit once again, presumably the last time before they died, the beloved old scenes — the places of their lost youth — in Ohio, Pennsylvania, "Old York State," New England, and old "Virginny."

A Tragedy of Homecoming Week—A Great McCutcheon Cartoon.

John T. McCutcheon, famous cartoonist of the Chicago Tribune and the dean of American cartoonists, who died June 11, 1949, used the appeal of the Home-Visitors Excursion as the theme of one of his great cartoons. This was entitled "A Tragedy of Homecoming Week," and was republished in the Tribune, October 29, 1949, as one of a series of weekly repeats of the McCutcheon masterpieces, one appearing each Saturday for many weeks.

This cartoon showed a seedy, down-at-the-heel vagrant standing in the dripping rain before "The City Ticket Office" of "The Midwest and Oceanic Railroad," studying a sign in the window, advertising "Excursion Rates for Homecoming Week. Go back and give the old folks a treat."

What were the feelings of the forlorn window-gazer may be left to the imagination. Also, displayed in the City Ticket Office windows were cards advertising "California Beaches" and "See Florida and Live." Charging by, oblivious to the rain, the worried homesick vagrant and the alluring ads was

a rich city man, doubtless a banker or a broker.

Niagara Falls Excursions.

Finally—as far as this brief narrative may be permitted to extend — there was always the lure of Niagara Falls, whether for honeymooners or for those long and happily or unhappily married. Excursion trains were operated for many years to the great scenic cataract, at really low cost, say from \$4.75 to \$8 for the round-trip. Long, delayed trains ground their way to the brink of the Falls with many hundreds of excursionists aboard.

Those Niagara Falls excursions represented a slice of Americana never to be witnessed again. Americans then really rode the rails. They sat up all night in day coaches, unvestibuled, with the dust and cinders beating with tornadic fury upon them. They ate from shoe-box lunches or sat on high stools at a lunch counter at some railway transfer point—"fifteen minutes for dinner" — like Danville Junction, Ill., or Bellefontaine, Ohio, to name these two only.

But, in truth, these tourists delighted in a few wonderful days away from the doldrums of home and farm and village. They really enjoyed a sight of the Falls. Many of them "crossed to the other side," experienced the thrill of being "outside the United States," usually for the only time in their lives. They lived upon these memories for months. Canada had been seen, if only across the Niagara River. What a thrill—in 1887!

America will never again see the tidal wave of low-cost, popular excursion trains to Niagara Falls especially. That mode of travel has vanished with the passing of other decades.

The T., P. & W. railroad was only one of many railroads which operated Niagara Falls excursions over a period of years.

All Destinations Not Included.

And it was just such an excursion train, with over 800 passengers crowded into 20 heavily loaded coaches which began its trek from Mississippi River towns in August, 1887.

This train did not reach Niagara Falls. Instead—it reached "The Chatsworth Wreck."

The fare for the round-trip was \$7.50. However, the journey included some points not designated on the ticket. Among these were many lonely graves ranging from beautiful Springdale Cemetery, Peoria, to numerous quiet resting-nooks in remote rural and village burial grounds and churchyards in Illinois and Iowa.

And, we hope, Heaven itself was included for many who had thrown themselves before the mercy-seat in old-time churches while the evangelist, in his fervor, preached upon reaching the Glory Land in the revivals of 1887.

Sandburg Tells It Best.

Carl Sandburg, noted Lincoln biographer, in the closing sentences of his massive, four-volume study, "Abraham Lincoln: the War Years," (1) poetically mentions "a great quiet" which descended over Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Ill., May 6, 1865, as the tired body of the martyred President was laid to rest. Just so, many bits of God's Acre provided "a great quiet" for the many persons who were killed in the Chatsworth Wreck, or for those who survived days, weeks, or months after the tragedy and then slipped from this world, their lives shortened by injuries, shock and worry sustained as a result of the catastrophe. With over 800 passengers on the ill-fated train, it can never be determined how many lives were cut short because of such harassing. Doubtless, the total number of "casualties" would spring from 81 or 85 to 200 or 300 if all the facts could be known and assembled.

(1) (Copyright, Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York. Used by Permission.)

CHAPTER FIVE

The Fatal Excursion Train.

The Special Excursion Train on the T., P. & W. railroad, August 10, 1887, originated at La Harpe, Ill., a few miles east of the Mississippi River, or possibly at Keokuk or Burlington, Ia. Many Iowa residents and many people from Western Illinois were passengers on the ill-fated train.

Origin of the Train.

The Chicago Tribune of August 12 stated that the train came through Abingdon Ill., and Galesburg, Ill., which meant it traveled from the western part of Illinois over the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad into Peoria. This could have been true, but this is the only reference made to the train traveling this route. In conversing with former residents of Western Illinois, they believe the passengers from the Galesburg area traveled on a Burlington train to Bushnell, Ill., and boarded the excursion train there. Such a train movement would have kept the excursion on the T., P. & W. rails—a more likely assumption. There were many Abingdon and Galesburg people aboard the wrecked train—with a number killed.

At any rate, the train left Peoria at 7:15 Wednesday evening, August 10, with 20 coaches. The Tribune states additional coaches were added at Abingdon and Galesburg, supporting the theory that the train went into Peoria over the Burlington Route. But, again, the coaches might have been added at Bushnell. Extra coaches were also added at Eureka.

Second Locomotive Added.

A second locomotive was attached to the train on the east side of the T., P. & W. bridge across the Illinois River, opposite Peoria. According to the Tribune, the final train consisted of two locomotives, one baggage car, one "pay-car," or official car, eleven passenger coaches, three chair cars and six Pullman sleeping cars. This makes a total of 22 cars, so the figure

of 20 cars in the Tribune does not tally with the breakdown. But throughout the story, we will find many discrepancies of details. Few, if any of them, alter the full importance of the tragedy. Other accounts say there were 17 cars in the train. The "pay-car" is also described as the superintendent's car and the official car in some accounts. E. N. Armstrong, the superintendent, was riding in this car when the wreck occurred.

The train apparently stopped at all important stations as passengers were "picked up" at Washington, Eureka, El Paso, Chenoa, Fairbury, Forrest and possibly Chatsworth, although one record says the train did not stop at Chatsworth. Many people boarded the train at Peoria, coming from Pekin, Mossville, Metamora, Chillicothe, Henry and other points in the general Peoria area.

The Weather in the Summer of 1887.

Newspapers uniformly reported the weather that summer as dry and hot. It had not rained for weeks. There were many reports of prairie fires over the Central West. New York papers gave much attention to the drought throughout many states. The Bloomington Pantagraph, the day before it carried the story of the wreck, gave much of the same space to items of the drought and damage to crops.

The stream where the wreck occurred was the north fork of the Vermillion River, which enters the Illinois River slightly east of La Salle, Ill. This stream is not to be confused with the Vermillion River of Vermillion County, Ill, which enters the Wabash River a few miles southeast of Danville, Ill.

What Started the Fire?

Grass was extremely dry in the area of the wreck site and there had been many fires along the right-of-way of all Illinois and Central Western railroads. There was constant danger of

fire spreading from grass and weeds to timber railroad bridges and this was exactly what caused the Chatsworth Wreck. But who or what force started the fire was a controversial topic for many years when the Chatsworth wreck was mentioned. Did section men start the fire, to destroy weeds? Did they put out the fire, or did they just think they extinguished it, with sparks smouldering here and there, only to break into flames once more? Did the last train over the bridge, before the wreck, at approximately 5 p. m. cause the fire to start by emitting sparks from its engine? This controversy will probably never be settled. What does it matter today—62 years afterwards?

The bridge was built of timbers or logs and planks. The logs were said by the Chicago Tribune reporter to have been from seven to 10 inches in diameter. There were four upright timbers of this size, topped with cross-cut logs nine or 10 inches square, and with 3-inch planks laid upon those

timbers as a base. Such was the bridge which was to carry two locomotives and a train of approximately 20 heavily loaded coaches.

The Chicago Tribune estimates the length of the bridge as 12 feet, the height over the dry creek bed six feet. Other papers say the bridge was 20 feet in length with eight or ten feet in depth. Today, the water in the stream is carried under the T., P. & W. tracks by two drain tile, each perhaps four feet in diameter. This writer has studied these drain tile and knows that the stream could not have carried much water, aside from periods of floods and freshets. Obviously, it was hot and dry that summer and had been for some time.

The bridge was practically destroyed by the fire which enveloped it, even to the upright timbers breaking off, so badly were they burned. It was estimated that the fire had raged for two hours before the train dashed upon the bridge.

CHAPTER SIX

The Zero Moment—The Wreck.

Progress of the Train.

The train, heavily loaded as noted, and constantly delayed, was due at Chatsworth at 10:33 at night. However, it was approaching midnight when the train passed Chatsworth.

The speed of the train as it approached the bridge, traveling down-grade, has been reported at 20, 25 and 40 miles an hour. There is a grade upward upon leaving Chatsworth, which extends about two miles, and is followed by a down-grade. It was on top of this slight divide that Engineer David Sutherland, in charge of the first locomotive, No. 21, sighted the blazing bridge directly ahead, with no time to stop his heavy train. Some reports were that the train had deliberately increased its speed to make up for lost time.

The burning bridge was still strong enough to bear considerable weight, for Sutherland's engine passed over it, but the tender broke through and went down, becoming uncoupled. The disabled engine then traveled about 1,000 feet before Sutherland was able to bring it under control. He realized the enormity of the tragedy and sped on to Piper City, about two miles east sans tender. He had presence of mind enough to shut off the water from the tender to the engine and thereby saved 1,000 gallons of water to be used at the wreck site.

Stories vary about Sutherland's engine upon its arrival in Piper City. One report says his engine "went dead," another that he backed to the wreck site. His fireman, Rogers, had jumped and was uninjured save for slight cuts. Sutherland rang the fire-bell and aroused the town. Some reports said he blew his whistle, did not ring the fire-bell. One story goes that he and the men who answered his alarm broke into the section house and removed the hand-car to convey helpers to the wreck site.

The second engine, No. 19, and the smaller of the two, with Engineer E. B. McClintock in charge and Alex Applegren, fireman, "went clean through" as one reporter expressed it, the ditch after falling downwards through the collapsing bridge and overturned in the creek. McClintock, Peoria, Ill., was instantly killed, after being decapitated and his brains were said to have been scattered over the cab of the engine. J. W. Stillwell was the conductor. He was uninjured.

The reports also say that a brakeman on one of the Pullman cars ran the entire three miles to Chatsworth and gave the alarm.

Unfortunately, another tragedy, slight indeed compared to the Chatsworth Wreck, occurred for the T., P. & W. that fatal night. The depot at Farmdale, just east of Peoria, burned, cutting off telegraphic communications into Peoria for several hours. Ever notice — that one catastrophe leads to another? Usually one fire in a city means two more. Bad luck comes in bunches, runs an old saying.

A special train was made up at Gilman, about 15 miles east and reached the wreck at 1 a. m. Another relief train was organized at Forrest and reached the wreck at 12:45. It happened there were engines on hand at both points, probably the Illinois Central at Gilman and doubtless the Wabash at Forrest.

The actual split minute timing of the wreck is given at 11:55 p. m., the date Wednesday, August 10, 1887. We use the dates August 10-11 in this study. Watches of victims of the wreck were found to have stopped a few minutes after midnight, but there were, of course, variations in watches.

We are told the Gilman special train and the Forrest special brought physicians, medical appliances and band-

ages. In villages there could be only a few physicians at best, and at midnight some of them might be out in the rural districts on horse and buggy calls remote from town, with no local or farm telephones available. How many bandages could suddenly and immediately be found at the hour of midnight which was absolute dead of the night in small towns like Piper City, Chatsworth, Forrest and Gilman, is problematical.

Bandages Available.

However, there is one fact which looms large in our consideration of the life of the people traveling and at home in 1887—and this study is fundamentally a review of the life of the people in the Central West over 60 years ago. It must be remembered that farm-wives and village homemakers six decades ago bought large quantities of dry-goods in yardage or "from the bolt" in local stores. "Ready-made" was not ready-made then—was unknown. All sewing was done by local dressmakers as seamstresses were known, and much of it was done in small town and village homes. Women, in 1887, kept in their homes far more yards of muslin and other goods available for bandages than would possibly be available at present. Yards of muslin could be immediately seized in homes 62 years ago which would simply not exist today. This will explain why "bandages" were instantly to be found, in the dead of the night, at a time when first-aid outfits were undreamed-of.

The Stroke of Midnight— The Zero Moment.

Assuming midnight as the exact hour of the plunge of the second engine and the coaches either into the dry ditch or, even more hazardous, into and above each other, the many interviews with survivors of the wreck, or with the injured, or "the wounded," agree substantially with each other in general content.

A Suggestion of Hell.

First — there was a moment of in-

tense stillness, and a shock. What this shock might have been is anyone's surmise. It is like the split second in an automobile accident or in a plane plunge when people, facing either death or serious injury, have that feeling of inescapable, impending doom. Several hundreds of people were on the train, just as passengers now ride in motor cars or in planes. There was that consciousness, for seconds — and seconds can sometimes seem like the Eternity which the theologians tell us about — that something terrific, tremendous, involving life and death itself is immediately to occur. Practically every person interviewed by the reporters — and there were many of them—relayed the fact of a breathless stillness, followed by the feeling of shock, and then a mighty crash as the wooden coaches, striking either the yawning chasm, small enough yet wide enough and deep enough to create a real tragedy, began to smash into the ditch or, worse yet, into and on top of either other with demoniac fury. It is not profanity in the least to say that Hell itself had broken loose. If we, reading these lines, had been trapped passengers in any one of a number of the railway coaches at midnight, August 10, 1887, on the T., P. & W., when "The Chatsworth Wreck" was indeed making railroad history, we would have thought that Dante had been mild in speaking of the denizens of the Inferno. We would have thought, that for a terrible zero moment, that Satan and his legion of devils had suddenly secured the mastery over the powers of righteousness and were speedily waging instant warfare upon hapless and incompetent Man.

Cries of the Injured.

As the car timbers crashed with all the deafening roar of heart-rending screeches of splintering lumber, there arose the cries and groans of the injured—hundreds of them.

Men and women, in their anguish, prayed to a Merciful God for relief or for death. They sought, often in



Chaos — Confusion — Calamity.
Cut, Courtesy Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph.



The Tunis—the First Pullman Car Reposed in Mid-Air.
Cut, Courtesy Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph.

vain, their husbands and wife and children in the maddening chaos. Piercing cries of human anguish immediately rent the otherwise perfect summer night.

Hades may be worse—but the Chatsworth Wreck might have given both Dante and Milton some suggestions as to the height and depth of man's suffering and misery.

The entire string of wooden coaches vaulted at once into each other and upon each other. The mass was 200 feet in length and 50 feet in width, the peak of the wreckage said to have resembled a church tower. Cars telescoped into each other with death and torture for hundreds of imprisoned people.

Wooden Coaches—In their Palmy Days.

Wooden passenger cars were then in the hey-day of their popularity. Floors—ceilings—sides—and ends of coaches were made of lumber—simply wood and nothing more. There were no vestibules. Cinders, soot, ashes, dirt were wafted into the coaches. Patrons attending the outstanding pageant at the Chicago Railroad Fair in the summers of 1948 and 1949 received a baptism of cinders from the tiny, screeching locomotives running to and fro upon the stage. Such cinders and dust our grandsires assumed as part of a trip. Grandfather wore his "linen duster." Seats were screwed into the wooden floors.

Toilets were mere enclosures in each end of the coaches. There were no flush toilets, no running water. The toilets were mere open vents through which excreta and urine were precipitated to the ties and what ballast there was below. One could, of course, see through the vents, the sides of which were frequently clogged with human excreta. The doors of the toilets were usually locked on the outside while standing at stations.

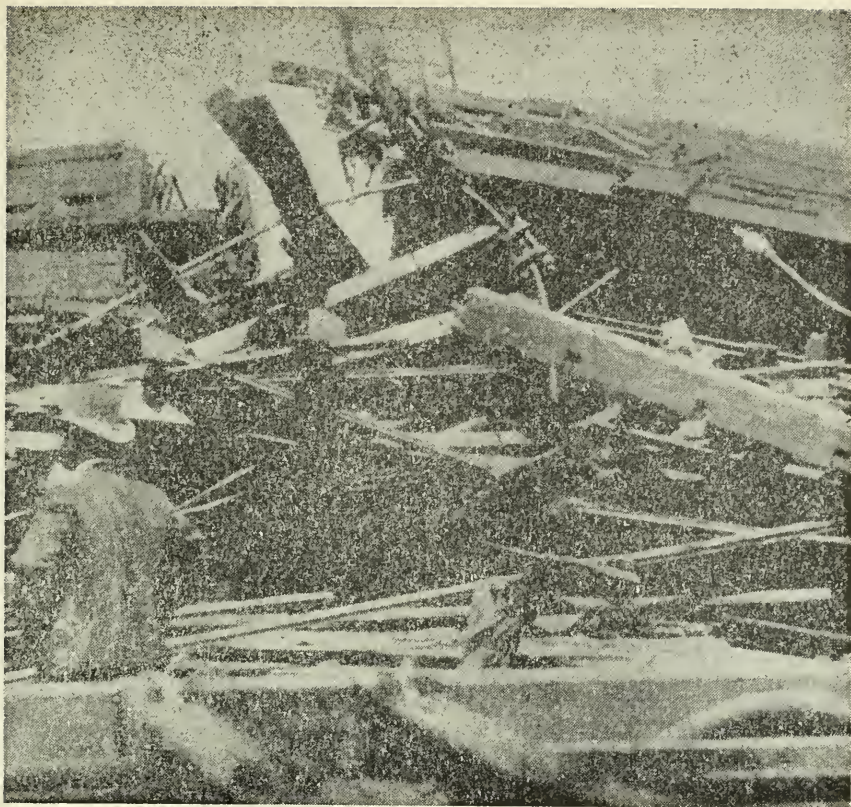
The Common Drinking Cup.

Cars were heated in winter with heating-stoves. Drinking water was available at each end. The common drinking cup was in universal service. There were no bacteria, of course, at that time! The common drinking-cup was held in high favor—no one had any other thought against this evil 60 years ago. The tanks were iced at division points; in fact, much of the water came from huge chunks of melting ice which filled the receptacles. When the ice melted—then passengers enjoyed warm water on hot days. Some passengers carried their own drinking cups, usually a tin cup bought at two for a nickel and hence they escaped the perils of the common drinking cup. How many people survived in spite of the microbes and bacteria in 1887 of which we hear so much today will never be known until the Books of the Better Land are audited. Marvelous to relate, children did not seem to have poliomyelitis; at least we did not have many crippled or paralyzed children in the 1880s as we have them today and as we are threatened with hundreds of them during the 1949 polio epidemic. After all, is polio a disease of civilization? Do we need that certain peck of dirt which folks secured in 1887 but which we are banishing in our ultra-modern days of 1949? We do not answer this problem, simply leave it for your consideration.

No More Excursion Trips?

We may well ask the question—did the terrifying Chatsworth Wreck so stagger people that they vowed, with one voice, "Never again — never will we set foot in another excursion train. Such trains are instruments of death and destruction, with men and women killed by the dozen, injured by the hundred—down with them."

Let us see. We noted in the Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph that a special Niagara Falls excursion on the Lake Erie and Western railroad (now the Nickel Plate Road) left Bloomington,



Kindling—Once Railroad Cars.
Cut, Courtesy Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph.



Searching—Or Mere Curiosity?
Cut, Courtesy Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph.

August 17, 1887—one week to a day after the Chatsworth Wreck, with 20 coaches and 850 passengers. This train made the trip safely. Passengers were as safe as a tabby cat snoozing on the home hearth. The "Lake Erie" special to Niagara Falls with 20 capacity-loaded wooden coaches crossed hazardous bridges and leaped intersecting railroad tracks by the score between Bloomington, Ill., and the great, bewildering gorge—without even scratching the faded paint of any one of the 20 wooden coaches.

Why did 850 people ride the Lake Erie and Western Niagara Falls excursion exactly one week after the T., P. & W. special to the Falls had been wrecked with such terrifying results in a mere culvert ditch at Chatsworth?

Frequently, we can answer a question by asking another, or others. Do people in 1949 refrain from driving automobiles, or riding in motor cars, because scores of people whom they have known, perhaps even members of their own families, have been killed or crippled for life in an automobile accident — hundreds of which occur each month on our far-flung highways in the United States?

Planes fly out from LaGuardia Field, New York, and from the Chicago airports with capacity groups, eager, happy, to enjoy a flight when they know that a 1,000-foot crash will mean instant death to each one of the 40 crew men and women and passengers aboard.

Pullman Cars Remain on Track— Almost.

The six Pullman cars at the end of the train hovered closely behind the splintering, smashing clatter of wooden coaches at the front of the train. Naturally, the Pullman cars, while of wooden construction, were much heavier than the ordinary passenger cars in front. Also, the momentum of the train had been checked, to a large extent, or to some extent at least. Furthermore, as the wooden coaches

smashed into kindling, their trucks dropped from beneath them and accumulated in the creek bed. This, of course, formed a barricade. When the first Pullman, "The Tunis," roared up to the actual locale of the wreck, it struck this pile of discarded trucks. The Tunis tottered dizzily over the yawning chasm. A chasm does not need to be over eight feet deep to enable a passenger car or an automobile to plunge head first into its depth. But the Tunis stopped then and there, its front trucks swaying over the open space where the timber bridge once stood, its rear trucks remaining on the rails. There, the Tunis hung, almost ready to drop. Later, timbers were supplied and the Tunis was bolstered in such a way that it would not collapse into the creek bed. The other five Pullman cars remained in their place on the rails.

No Dining Service.

There is no indication whatever, in the newspaper accounts, of Pullman passengers having any dining car privileges or any food service whatever, not even a snack bar, in the parlance of 1949. There is every belief that the Pullman passengers ate from their own hampers or lunch baskets or even shoe-boxes, or that they enjoyed the usual sandwich and cup of coffee at a railway lunch counter. If the porters served food or drinks to their Pullman passengers, there is nothing indicated to sustain such a belief.

The Train "Butcher."

Aiding the food proposition were the train newsboys, or "butchers," who sold fruit, candy and peanuts through the cars. They usually sold oranges, peaches and pears at three for a dime. Mixed candy of the old-fashioned type, was sold, as were chocolate drops and caramels. Butchers did a large business on special trains and excursion trains. People were traveling on a holiday trip or what might be called a "lark." People did not take vacations in 1887—vacations were not needed then, but they are in 1949. But people took trips or made

visits 60 years ago. Parents bought candy and peanuts for their children from the butcher. The children then drank ice water, and with certain car-sickness or train sickness, the children—and many adults as well—became ill. Vomiting was more or less common amid such crowded traveling conditions. But such inconveniences were smiled or laughed aside under the glory and the pleasure of a trip to Niagara Falls—the travel event of the summer season.

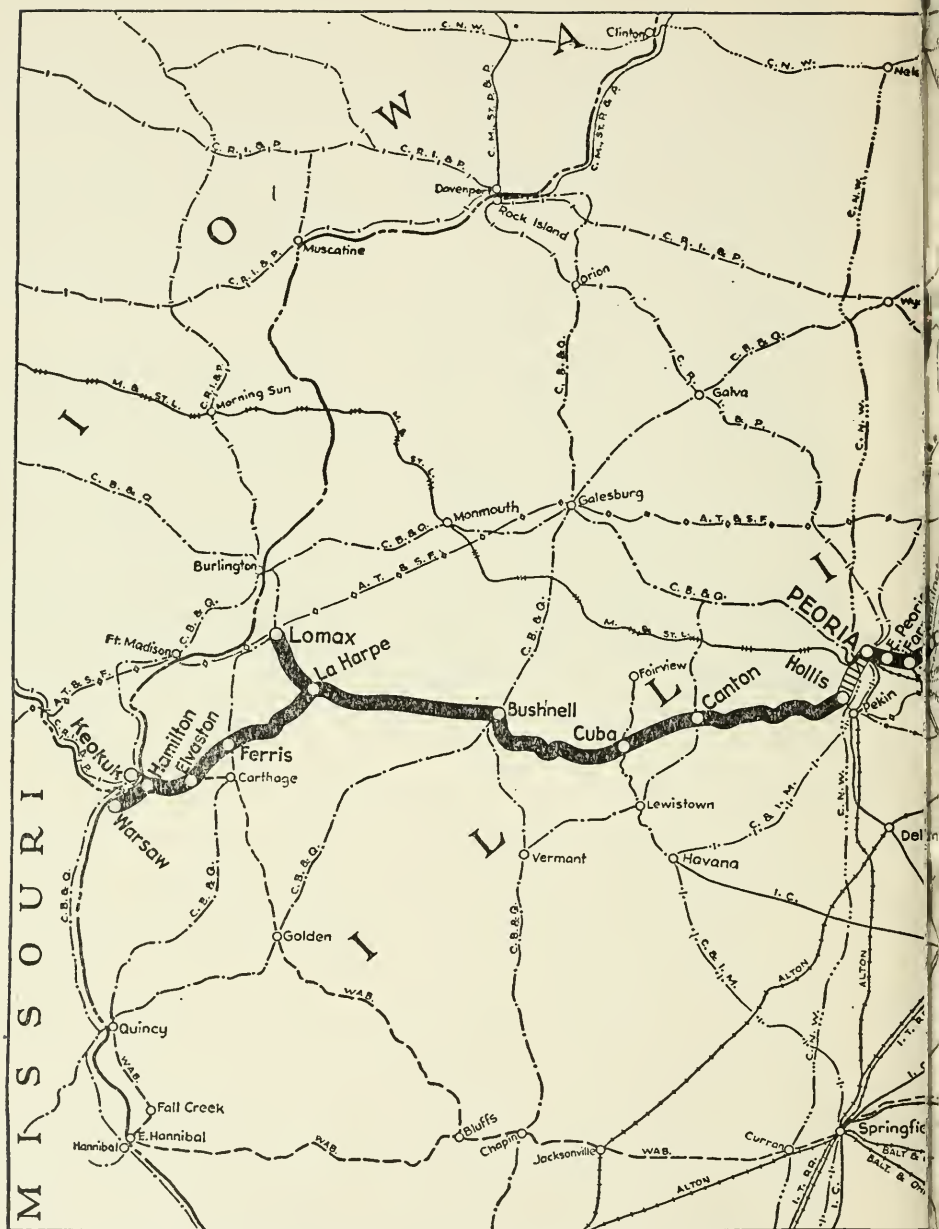
None Injured in Pullman Cars.

No one was injured in the six Pullmans, aside from an occasional scratch here and there, which slight mishaps were immediately forgotten. Pullman passengers swarmed out of their berths or their seats, if they had not retired, eager to help with the stupendous task of bringing out the dead and caring for the injured. One prominent Peoria man, Will O. Clark, and his wife, who had not retired, worked through the terrible night in their nightgowns. Mr. Clark called to his wife that the train had been wrecked and not to take time to even discard

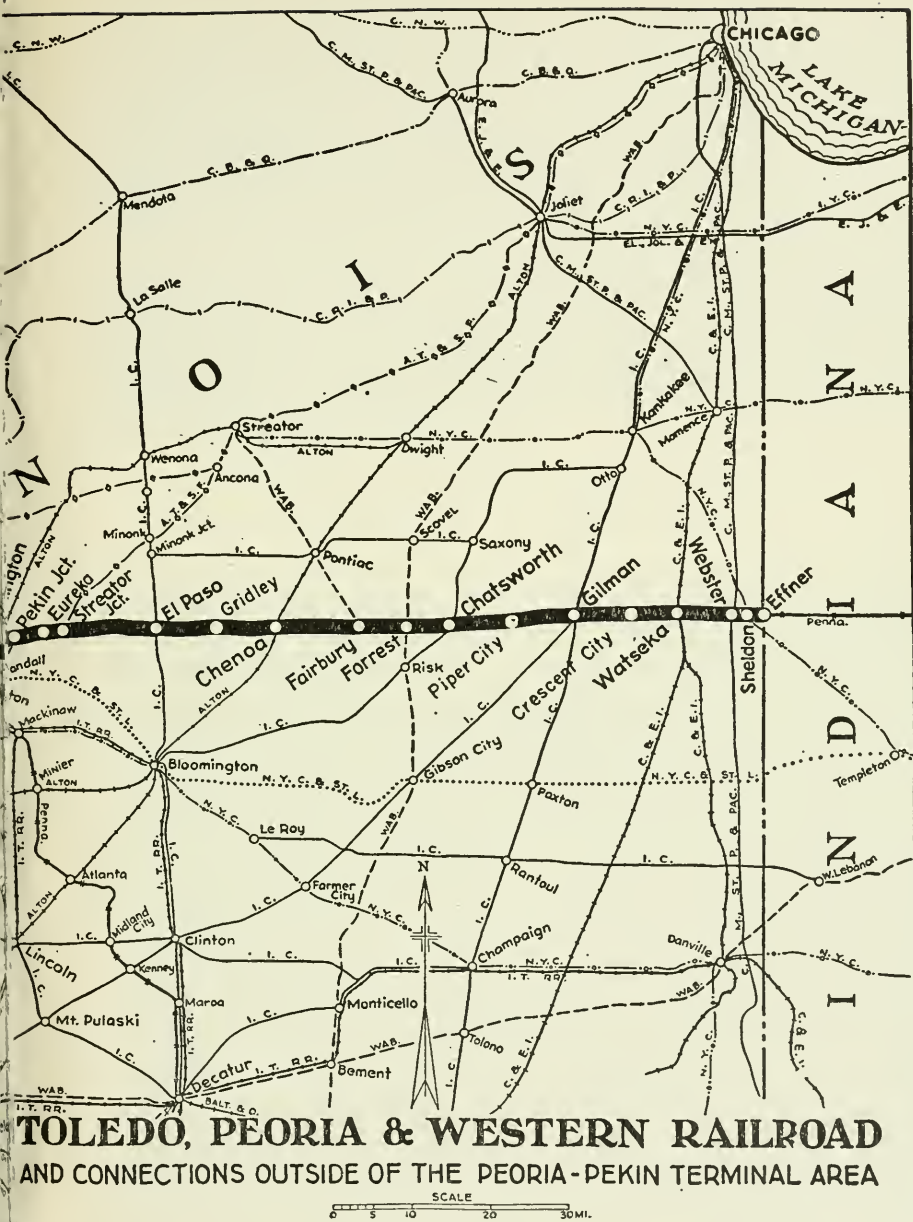
nightie for any semblance of street clothes. But there were so many people that awful night dressed—or undressed—in any and all conceivable types of clothing, or the lack of it, that a man and woman in flowing nightgowns were only two more persons to succor “the wounded.”

But if no one was injured in the six Pullman cars, hundreds were really wounded in the eleven passenger cars and the three chair cars. The “furniture” of the chair cars was broken into bits by the terrific impact of the wreck.

The Pullman car, “The Tunis,” which approached the gaping vacuum caused by the collapse of the burned culvert, and whose eastern door and truck wheels tottered over the chasm, was pulled to safety a few days after the wreck and was returned to Peoria through Chatsworth, Forrest and Fairbury on a T., P. & W. work train. The Pullman naturally attracted wide attention from spectators in all T., P. & W. towns.



Note Chatsworth, Piper City, Gilman, Forrest and Fairbury about map were near, on



way between Peoria and the Illinois-Indiana state line. No large cities
 small towns.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Aid and Succor at the Wreck Site.

Wreckage Takes Fire.

And now the real horror of the event occurred. The wreckage became ignited, either from the burning bridge timbers, or from the overturned oil lamps in the coaches, as kerosene was the only source of illumination for the cars. Happily, many of these oil lamps had been extinguished, as midnight approached, so that passengers in the day coaches might possibly catch forty winks of sleep while sitting almost upright in their most uncomfortable seats.

Aid From Farmers.

Aid came first from the uninjured and from those so slightly injured that they laughed their own hurts aside. Some nearby farmers arrived with shovels and spades. However, the number of neighboring farmers who came to help has been overstated, we believe, in the newspapers. There were no telephones. There were only a few farmhouses in the immediate vicinity near enough to hear the crash or to see the lights of the burning bridge and wreck. There are only a few farmhouses in that vicinity today. The wreck was in the open country. It must be recalled that the summer was dry and hot. Farmers worked long hours, with slow horses, in the fields and around their premises. They went to bed early, slept soundly. Those farmers who went immediately to the wreck were so overwhelmed with amazement at its magnitude and so anxious to aid with the injured that doubtless they gave little heed to arousing other farmers. Besides, the only means farmers had of reaching the wreck was by walking and running, or by riding horseback or driving horses.

Horses were tied to fences along the highways near the wreck-site. Above all, we must recall that a great burning wreck is no place for horses,

easily and quickly terrified by fire. This is no attempt to minimize the contribution of neighboring farmers, for many of them labored heroically digging dirt and clay to throw upon the burning wreckage and even dug dirt with their bare hands, as did surviving passengers, until their fingers and thumbs were bleeding.

Many people in Chatsworth hurried to the wreck "on foot," that is, walking or running. A number came also from Piper City before the arrival of the special train from Gilman, just as Chatsworth people, on foot, or using horses, reached the wreck before the special from Forrest came.

Real Heroism Displayed.

Heroism of the first order prevailed. Villagers, passengers, farmers, one and all, laid their willing hands to the task and gave first attention to extinguishing the fire which was rapidly consuming the splintered cars and which would have increased the death toll and the amount of suffering. Only a Gracious Heaven can reward those who worked so hard in utter disregard of their own comfort or their own injuries. The Chicago Tribune commented, very appropriately, that only in the next world would "The Good Samaritans" of Chatsworth be rewarded.

The Rain Came—A Blessing, a Trial.

About 3 a. m., rain—thanks to a Kind Providence—began to fall. One of the worst droughts in the history of the Central West and of the nation was broken. Rain fell in torrents for about two hours. The dust and grime through which the Samaritans waded was soon turned into mud, through which these willing souls again waded. Dust or rain—made no difference to those who were doing their bit under the most distressing circumstances of wreckage, fire, death, suffering, rain and mud.



People Could Not Believe This Until It Happened.

Cut, Courtesy Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph.



Was This a Train?

Cut, Courtesy Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph.

The question naturally arises, what would have been the happy result if the rain had begun at 3 p. m. the day of the wreck instead of 3 a. m., the early morning following the tragedy? A real rain, and that was what actually came, would have extinguished the bridge fire in all probability — there would have been no Chatsworth Wreck. But the rain was delayed. The fire burned briskly through the evening hours. The bridge was weakened. It went down. The long, heavy train plunged into it. There was a Chatsworth Wreck. Man is indeed futile in regulating the affairs of Nature or of Divinity, as we may choose to regard the Overall of the Universe.

Removal of the Dead and Injured.

As rapidly as the comparatively small number of helpers could work, the remains of the dead and the tangled bodies of the injured were removed from the burning cars.

By 1:30 a. m. enough of the dead and injured had been removed from the burning wreck to have them loaded upon the train which came from Forrest for a back-up train movement to Chatsworth. The charge was made immediately, and we will consider some accusations later, that the railroad company deliberately transported dead bodies to Chatsworth and let injured people lie in the adjoining field so as to possibly minimize the knowledge of so many deaths and injuries.

The dead bodies were first laid out in rows in "the oats stubble," according to one paper and in "the wheat stubble" in another newspaper, then transported to Chatsworth.

The injured were removed as rapidly as the comparatively few men, who had to fight the blaze for the first hour or two, could make their way to where the cries for help were originating. Everywhere, there were cries of "Water, Water" with no water at hand to either combat the flames or to succor "the wounded."

Some farmers brought with them shovels, spades and axes, but there were too few utensils to attack a real mountainside of inferno plus several hundred more or less seriously injured men, women and children.

There were tools in each of the battered coaches, for even then railroad companies provided a glass front compartment in each coach, equipped with a saw, an ax, a sledge hammer, or an adz. However, some of these cases were far out of reach, and their tools could not be secured instantaneously, hence this source of relief was reduced materially.

Chatsworth—One Large Morgue and Hospital.

The village of Chatsworth was soon transformed from a typical Illinois small town of the 1880s into a bleak sanctuary for the dead and a hastily improvised hospital for the injured.

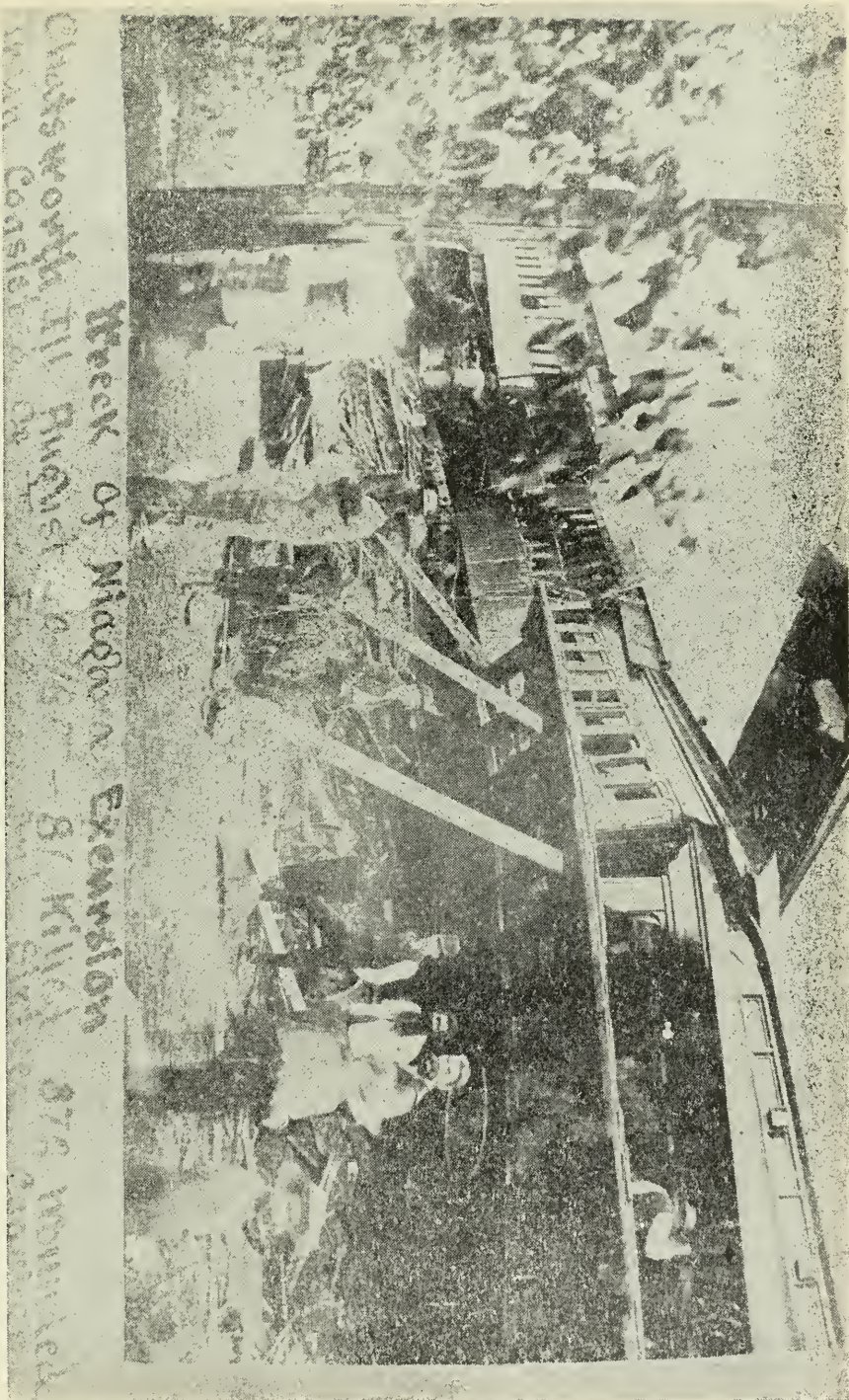
By noon, Thursday, August 11, the Chicago Tribune reporter counted 71 dead bodies in Chatsworth, distributed as follows: Filber Building, 27; baggage room of the T., P. & W. station, 24; and the school house, 20.

Both floors of the town hall were covered with the injured, to whom the fine women and men of Chatsworth were rendering every possible aid.

With the arrival of relief trains, especially the first one from Peoria, upon which many relatives of the dead and injured were transported, Chatsworth became a seething camp of seekers for bad news, even the worst of information. The crowd was variously estimated at several—or many—thousands.

So many persons sought entrance to the T., P. & W. depot that armed guards were posted at the doors and only those who were really qualified to enter, were permitted to try to identify their dead. Seekers for their loved ones made the grewsome rounds of the three temporary morgues, lifting the sheet or blanket or carpet or some-

Mr. Haberkorn has three excellent pictures of the wreck. They are somewhat faded, but still of immense historical importance and interest. This picture shows clearly the boards or planks which were placed to the tops of the twisted and gnarled coaches for the purpose of sliding to Mother Earth the bodies of the dead or the broken forms of the injured—all very weird, indeed, but most realistic. This is the only picture we have seen which shows these planks in position.



thing in the way of cloth from each face and attempting to find someone dear to their hearts. As rapidly as identification was established, the dead were ticketed by the Chatsworth mortician and the Livingston county coroner, and hastily placed into plain, pine racks or cases. A crew of carpenters was suddenly marshalled into duty, and securing pine boards from the lumber yard, at once began their duties of marking the final resting places of 70 or 80 persons.

L. J. Haberkorn, Chatsworth, Ill., says that these racks or cases were not coffins or caskets in the usual sense of the word "casket." Workmen secured 12-inch boards from the lumber yard, sawed them into two six-foot lengths.

Three cleats were placed under each six-inch board, to make them stand upright. The dead were then laid upon these boards, with something in the way of cloth, carpet, rug, (or what could the people of Chatsworth find?) thrown over them to serve as a temporary shroud.

Mr. Haberkorn says no caskets were brought overland from Bloomington, as that process would have been too tedious, bringing them on horse-drawn hay-racks. He also says no caskets, as such, were made instantly in Chatsworth.

Condition of the Injured.

The English language is an inadequate vehicle to convey the scene of desolation at the wreck.

Men, women and children were found in every degree of mangled form in the splintered coaches. Bodies were found hanging head or feet down. A child was found embedded on the roof of a car. Legs and arms and even heads were found about the wreckage. Persons picked up extremities of the human body hither and thither and yon about the shattered cars.

Reporters tell the stories of at least two men who drew pistols and ended

their lives, amid their suffering. One man, with mangled body, exclaimed, "I have nothing to live for," and drawing his revolver fired a bullet into his head. The stories of the two suicides may have been repetitions—this could well be, as the confusion was indescribable.

Civil War Veteran Laughed.

One Civil War veteran, whose leg was fractured in the wreck, sneered and sniffed at the carnage about him.

"You folks think this is awful, of course," he laughed, "but I went through such hell down in Dixie that I don't pay no attention to an affair like this." And he could have been right, if he had been through the terrible days at Gettysburg, Antietam, Fredericksburg, where thousands, not hundreds, were killed and wounded. After all, disasters are terrible, yet they are, unfortunately, historic. Who was any more correct than General Sherman when he said, "War is hell"?

Many exciting stories were related about escapes from death or injury by survivors such as the story of husband meeting death from splintering timbers while his wife beside him was only slightly injured. Some of these stories may have grown with the telling. Others, however, were minimized.

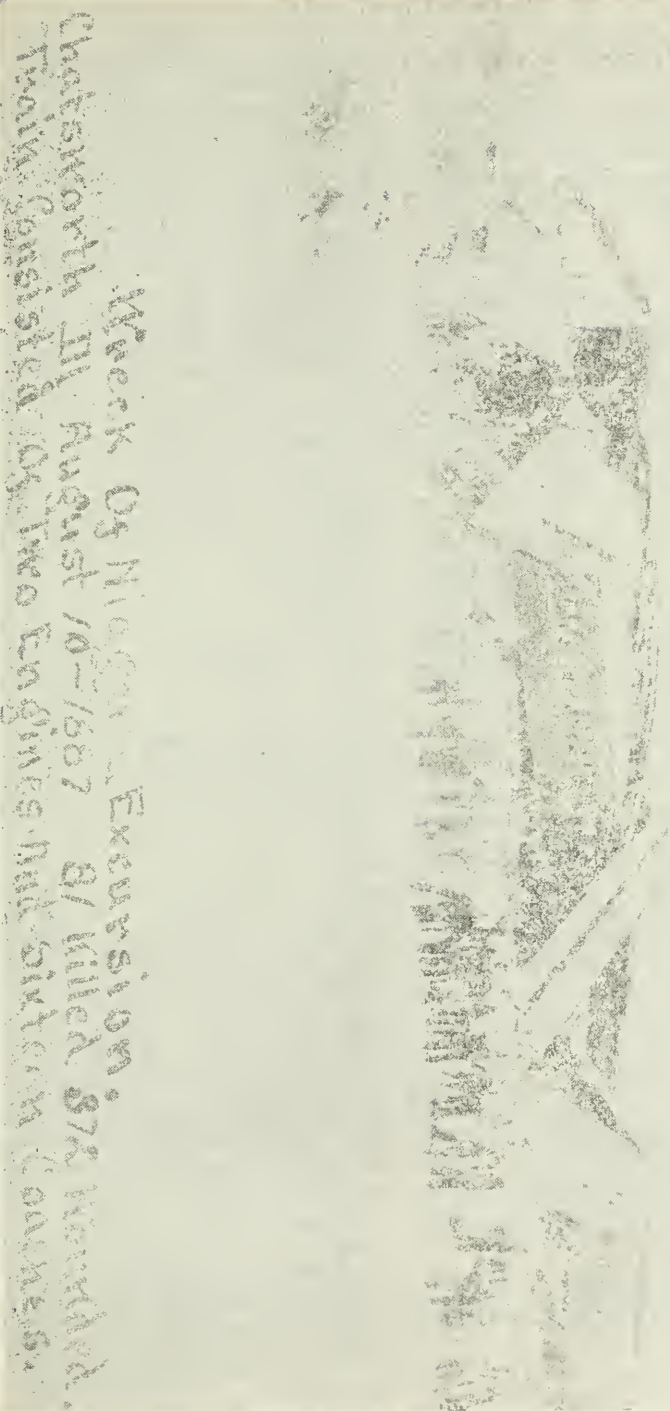
Serious injuries consisted of fractured arms, legs, ribs, chest and breast bones, cuts, bruises, sprains and every conceivable form of bodily injury as hundreds of people were hurled suddenly from their seats onto the floor or to the ceiling of coaches or dashed through windows.

Refreshments at the Wreck.

Even a reporter, who is supposed to take everything in his stride, became weary of the depressing sights.

"I had to take refuge in a good snort of brandy," wailed one reporter.

A prominent citizen of Piper City brought blankets, medicines, coffee and whisky. Another sympathetic resident of Piper City brought a demijohn of whisky.



Wreck Of Niagara Excursion.

*Chatsworth Ill August 16-1887 81 killed 878 wounded.
Train consisted of two engines and sixteen coaches.*

Note the Wrecked Coaches—Also Note L. J. Haberkorn's Pictures of 81 Killed and 872 "Wounded."

Cut. Courtesy L. J. Haberkorn, Chatsworth, Ill.

CHAPTER EIGHT

L. J. Haberkorn and His Experiences at the Wreck.

A business man of Chatsworth for more than 62 years, L. J. Haberkorn was the first man aroused in Chatsworth following the midnight wreck. He led the original group of about 15 men from that town to the site of the wreck.

Mr. Haberkorn operated a restaurant and hotel in Chatsworth in the summer of 1887. He and Mrs. Haberkorn decided, at the last moment, to cancel their plans to take the ill-fated Niagara Falls excursion train because of an injury to one of Mrs. Haberkorn's fingers. What a fortunate escape!

When a brakeman walked or ran into Chatsworth to sound the alarm there, he met a man on the street who was employed at the tile factory and who was going home. Doubtless this tile factory employee was a fireman or was engaged in night work.

The depot was closed, after the excursion train had passed. The brakeman asked the tile factory employee where the agent lived and to get him to come to the station to send out the terrible news.

"The excursion train is out there in the ditch," was the alarm which Mr. Haberkorn received, when the agent had aroused him from sleep. Obviously, as the owner of the hotel and restaurant, Mr. Haberkorn was notified first.

Haberkorn ran to the fire alarm tower immediately and sounded a vigorous clanging of the fire bell. Men soon began running from all directions. Not seeing any flames or smoke, they demanded to know where the fire was.

"The excursion train is out there in the ditch," Mr. Haberkorn assured them.

Forthwith, a group of about 15 men followed Haberkorn to the scene of the ghastly wreck. They walked down

the track and rendered all assistance possible.

When Mr. Haberkorn reached the actual scene of the wreck he heard the voice of a distressed man calling, "Oh, my God, Oh, my God" in a pitiable voice.

Haberkorn reached the side of this man, who was wandering in the field beside the wreck.

"What can I do for you?" asked Haberkorn.

"Oh, my God" screamed the man again. "I want water," the injured wreck victim continued. "My wife and three children are dead in this terrible wreck. Oh, my God."

Mr. Haberkorn supplied the water to the man's lips. In an instant, there was the sound of a pistol shot. The man had taken his own life. Whether there was a second suicide at the wreck, as was indicated by one of the newspaper reporters, is a mooted question, which will never be verified. However, Mr. Haberkorn was able to verify that this man's wife and three children had been killed in the wreck.

Wagons Hastily Assembled.

Mr. Haberkorn also recalls that hayracks, or wide, horse-drawn wagons, were hastily rigged up to convey men and supplies to the wreck site. A road was worn along the side of the railroad track by these wagons, taking out supplies and helpers and bringing into Chatsworth the dead and "wounded" As Chatsworth is on the half-section line, it would have been necessary for teams and wagons to have driven a half-mile south to what is now U. S. 24, then east about three miles, and then north the additional half-mile to reach the wreck. By wearing a road along the railroad track, a mile was saved, which was all-important at a time when horses provided the sole motive power.

L. J. Haberkorn a Hero.

L. J. Haberkorn, operating a music store in Chatsworth, and now over 88 years of age, and Mrs. Haberkorn, had made all of their arrangements to ride the special excursion train. But the day the ill-fated train was to pass through their town, Mrs. Haberkorn developed a serious felon on her finger and they cancelled their plans for the trip. Mr. Haberkorn was then operating a hotel and restaurant on the principal business corner in Chatsworth. He recalls seeing the dead bodies laid out in rows on the depot platform about one block south of his restaurant. The Chicago Tribune reporters boarded with him while in Chatsworth. He and his son believe that there was no truth in the stories of the dead and injured being robbed by ghouls.

The train did stop at Chatsworth, according to L. J. Haberkorn, one of the acknowledged authorities upon the details of "The Chatsworth Wreck." Mr. and Mrs. T. Y. Brown, Chatsworth, intimate friends of Mr. and Mrs. Haberkorn, boarded the train at their home town. Further mention of the Browns is given in the Haberkorn story in this volume. (See next column.)

Preserves Lantern.

Mr. Haberkorn preserves the lantern which he used the night of the wreck to guide the group of about 15 men through the darkness to the site of the tragedy. He displayed it one time in the window of his store when various trophies of the wreck were shown. He does not believe that any one of the 15 men who followed him to the wreck is living today. Mr. Haberkorn is now 88 years of age, yet went to his store daily during the summer of 1949. He writes upon his own typewriter. He hears well, and reads and writes without glasses. He is among the few persons living who rendered valiant aid at the wreck as he was then 26 years of age.

He served as chairman of the program when the last meeting of the

survivors of the wreck was held in Chatsworth August 12, 1937, or 50 years after the wreck.

Food Exhausted in Chatsworth.

As the owner of the restaurant and hotel, Mr. Haberkorn faced an embarrassment of riches in trying to supply the needs of the hungry crowd which milled through the streets of Chatsworth August 11, the day after the wreck. He was sold out of every substance of food. People begged for food which he could not supply. One man, apparently famished for food, was assured the Haberkorn larder had been exhausted. This man sat down at a table and went through the motions of eating with his knife and fork.

Grocery Stores Depleted.

So many people assembled in Chatsworth especially that food supplies were exhausted. The hotel and restaurants were entirely unable to care for the food demands made upon them. Grocery stores were depleted of crackers, cheese, canned goods, sardines, anything which would serve for a lunch. Meat markets were sold out of bologna and dried beef.

T. Y. Brown, Chatsworth, and Mrs. Brown boarded the excursion train when it pulled into their home town. In fact, several persons from Chatsworth took the train. Mr. and Mrs. Brown happened to be inside one of the Pullman cars when the wreck occurred and were not injured. No one from Chatsworth was injured.

At the wreck site, Mr. Haberkorn was happy to meet Mr. and Mrs. T. Y. Brown, Chatsworth, and his warm personal friends, who had boarded the excursion at Chatsworth, and who had seats in one of the Pullman cars. When the train stopped at Chatsworth, the Browns were told to board one of the coaches and then to walk back through the cars to their Pullman. They had just entered the front part of the first Pullman when the zero moment occurred. The last coach through which they had walked was smashed up

against the end of the first Pullman, which remained on the rails but with its front trucks suspended in mid-air over the small chasm which had caused the wreck. The Browns were saved. Had they been a few seconds later, they would have been in the wooden coach and would have perished undoubtedly.

Mr. Haberkorn was overjoyed when he saw Mr. and Mrs. Brown, then each about 80 years of age. He embraced them for sheer joy. Both Mr. and Mrs. Brown lived several years afterwards.

Armstrong Injured in the Wreck.

C. C. Kingdon, cashier, Woodford County National Bank, El Paso, Ill., writes that J. A. Smith, Jr., El Paso, has loaned him the original sign which E. N. Armstrong, General Superintendent of the T., P. & W., who was riding in the official car on the ill-fated train, tacked on the door of the hall in the Filber Building, Chatsworth, used as a temporary hospital, which read, "Chatsworth, Ill., August 11, 1887. No one allowed in this room except on business. By Order of E. N. Armstrong, General Supt."

Mr. Smith also says that Armstrong's car was thrown across the track and that he was scalded by steam from the engine. Mr. Smith says he stayed at their home. He saw Armstrong take off his shirt and unloosen his trousers and that the skin came off in quite an area. Armstrong took butter

or lard and applied it and then went back to the work of which he had charge.

J. A. Smith, Sr., father of J. A. Smith, Jr., was mayor of Chatsworth, or rather, president of the village board, also the editor and publisher of the Chatsworth Plaindealer, which published at least three special editions. J. A. Smith, Jr., has a copy of the third special edition. This carries the list of Chatsworth homes which were used as hospitals.

Threatened Trial of Railroad Officials.

The newspapers of the period fairly rang with demands that the officials of the T., P. & W. railroad be tried for some crime, possibly criminal carelessness. There was a demand that Track Foreman Sullivan, who was charged with not extinguishing the grass and weeds fire along the right-of-way, be tried. However the charge could not be proved and there was no trial either of Sullivan or any other employe or official.

Balloon Aviator Safe.

As a sidelight upon the depths of the tragedy, it happened that there was a balloon ascension at Cullom, Ill., nine miles north of Chatsworth. The aviator was "Prof." Talbert, who, when 1,000 feet in the air, was forced to make a quick landing. "He escaped serious injury" and was conveyed to Cullom in a buggy. Talbert was simply lucky—safer in the air than on the T., P. & W. train, it seemed.



L. J. HABERKORN, CHATSWORTH, ILL.

L. J. Haberkorn stands in front of his Chatsworth store. He holds in his left hand the lantern he carried to the

wreck. He was the first man aroused in Chatsworth by the brakeman of the wrecked excursion train.

CHAPTER NINE

Newspaper Coverage of the Wreck.

The Newspapers of 1887.

This writer has made a thorough study of the New York Herald, the New York Tribune, the Chicago Tribune, the Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph (which gave one of the best reports of all), as well as having collected items and news reports of the catastrophe for many years.

He has lived his entire life in Central Illinois and during his childhood, boyhood and youth, he constantly heard his elders talk about the Chatsworth Wreck. He little thought then that he would prepare a book account of the tragedy. He has also visited the site of the wreck and has talked with numerous people who lived in the wreck area and who were either helpers at the wreck or who were reared in the intimate knowledge of the accident.

No Survivors to Be Interviewed.

Now—over 62 years after the wreck—it has become impossible to converse with actual survivors. A careful check at Chatsworth in August, 1949, revealed no survivors of the accident are living. Many people still live in Piper City, Chatsworth, Forrest, Fairbury, other towns, who recall, vividly indeed, the wreck. A lad 16 years of age in 1887 would obviously be 78 today. Some youths who helped at the wreck or who went to the wreck-site, are still living and they carry stirring recollections.

The idea of publishing as accurate a description as possible of the wreck over six decades after it happened is to preserve a historical review not alone of the tragedy itself, but fully as important, a picture of the period in which it occurred and the mode of travel in use at that time. The latter is sought in this work as much—or even more—than many sordid facts of the wreck itself.

No Bannerlines.

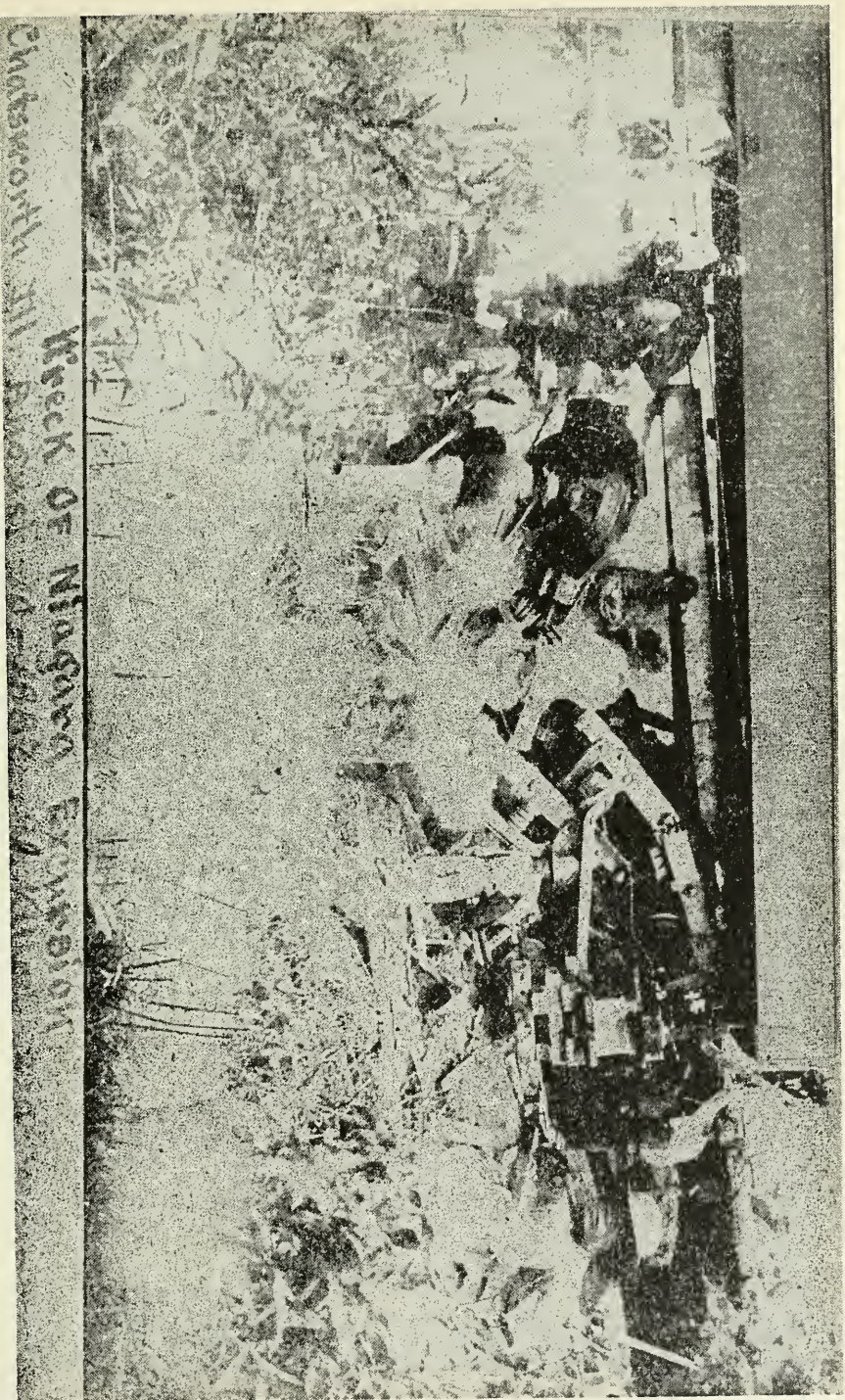
Newspapers in 1887 did not use screaming headlines, or bannerlines. Type was set into molds, so that columns were never broken, could not be broken—even for the Chatsworth Wreck, one of the greatest tragedies to that date. Banks of headlines were used, down the single lead column, usually from four to seven tiers of “heads” appearing in the metropolitan paper.

Chicago Tribune Runs Special Train.

The Chicago Tribune did not use the story until Friday, August 12. The facts of the wreck were not generally known until after the August 11 morning papers went to press.

The Tribune sent a special train with reporters leaving Chicago at 12:35 Thursday afternoon, August 11. This train then proceeded down the present main line of the Illinois Central from Chicago to Kankakee. We must always remember that the original “main line” of the Illinois Central was through Decatur, Clinton, Bloomington, El Paso, La Salle, Dixon and Amboy to Freeport. From Kankakee, the train moved southwestward on its Kankakee-Bloomington branch to Chatsworth itself. The train carried three reporters, two “expert” telegraph operators and two young men who had brothers in the wreck. These brothers, incidentally, according to the Tribune, had ridden bicycles from Chicago to Peoria and were then on their way home, doubtless riding the T., P. & W. from Peoria to Gilman, then changing to the Illinois Central to Chicago. Regular passengers were carried just as patrons of the Niagara Falls excursion. How the Tribune reporters reached the actual wreck-site from Chatsworth is not noted in their story, but they were probably conveyed there by a livery “rig.”

The story appeared in the New York



Chatsworth, Ill.

Wreck of Niagara Express

Coaches In Ditch—Sleeper In Air.
From the L. J. Haberkorn Collection, Chatsworth, Ill.

Herald and the New York Tribune the same morning, August 12, interestingly enough, as the Chicago Tribune. Abundant space was allotted to the tragedy in all of these newspapers as well as in the Bloomington Pantagraph and other Central Western newspapers.

Reporters Have Gala Time.

This assignment was a real coverage for the reporters. They were given plenty of space—always a desirable but usually unattainable goal for a reporter. The usual fate of a reporter on a hot story is to have his story cut to pieces and to have most of it, at least much of it, eliminated, or possibly “murdered,” probably because of “lack of space.” But in 1887 newspapers seemed to have had plenty of space. Lack of space seems to have arisen in the 1940s with the shortage of food, tires, printpaper and other commodities. But in 1887 a reporter sent to cover a grim disaster like the Chatsworth Wreck may have had a gruelling experience but at least he would have the satisfaction of seeing columns of his story in print. In fact, the Chatsworth Wreck was a real field day for an energetic reporter. There is much fine writing in the various newspaper accounts, also much ordinary reporting. There is, of course, much repetition among the various stories, indicating that many newspapers used the same telegraphic accounts, which was only a sensible and efficient way of hurriedly covering the catastrophe.

Divergent Facts Presented.

There are also widely differing comments with divergent facts among the reports. This is entirely natural for five persons witnessing an automobile accident in 1949 would tell substantially the same story, but each would relate different details and would give divergent interpretations of the causes of the mishap. Human nature runs true to a general pattern whether the years are 1887 or 1949.

Sidelights on the News.

There are interesting sidelights upon the current events of 1887. Advertising was much more limited than at present—probably the reason why the reporters got a lovely break. Perhaps too abundant advertising is the 1949 reason for “lack of space.” Display ads were used in great moderation. Want ads at 10 cents a line in the Chicago Tribune were used by the dozen. The Tribune was 15 cents a week. Pictures were used rarely. The Chicago Tribune carried August 12 an excellent map of the Chatsworth area, and two small pictures in the August 14 issue. But “pix,” so much a part of journalism today, were not used even in the metropolitan newspapers 62 years ago. One reporter spoke of seeing “a photographer with a lot of negatives” at the wreck site. Where are his pictures today?

Variation in Casualties.

Reports varied widely as to casualties. A Peoria paper first reported there were four killed and four injured. Some newspapers a day later reported “hundreds killed.” In the first days after the wreck, the number of dead was reported at 118, 109, 90 and numerous other figures.

Influence of Civil War.

As previously noted in this volume, the injured were usually spoken of as “the wounded,” clearly reflecting Civil War influence. It is possible that the reporters were Civil War veterans. A man leaving “the army” as it was designated by its veterans in 1865, at the age of 23, would have been only 45 years old at the time of the wreck. Without question, many of the crew members, the passengers, the people who aided the survivors of the wreck, were Civil War veterans or the wives of veterans. Hence, the common use of the word “wounded.”

New York Newspaper Coverage.

The New York Herald Saturday, August 13, carried headlines such as “The Dead and Dying”; “Who is to Blame for the Suffering in Illinois?”;

"Parsimony—One Cause of Disaster"; "Identifying the Dead," and "Suffering Peoria." This issue of the Herald tells us that the T., P. & W. wrecking crew had the track restored and service restored at 3 p. m. Friday, August 12, or 39 hours after the zero moment.

The Herald, Sunday, August 14, headlined such topics as "Clearing the Wreck"; "Peoria in Mourning"; "Coroner Investigates"; "Who Is Responsible?" and follows this with news that Mrs. Grover Cleveland, wife of the President of the United States, had left her summer home at Marion, Mass, and had returned to Washington, D. C.

Monday, August 15, the Herald speaks of "The Lesson of the Disaster"; "Bridges Must Be Made Fire-proof" and "An Official Inspection" to be made by members of the Illinois State Railroad and Warehouse Commission, the predecessor of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

The New York Tribune gave an ample coverage to the disaster, presenting several pages daily for three or four days. It gave the train length as "17 coaches and sleepers." It spoke of the torrents of rain which fell soon after the wreck, saying "Rains Break the Drought." Its headlines Saturday, August 13, were "The Calamity in Illinois"; "Caring Kindly for the Wounded," and "Searching Among the Bodies of the Dead."

Many human interest stories appear throughout the comment on the wreck. One traveling man "running" for a wholesale grocery house slept past his station (which was probably Fairbury or Forrest) and was killed. R. G. Risser, Kankakee, Ill., missed the train at El Paso and had to ride on a following freight train. He lived.

The Chatsworth Wreck disappeared from the New York papers by Tuesday, August 15. Life goes on—regardless of suffering and death.

Newspaper News and Style in 1887.

The New York Herald was then published "With Supplement" and with "Quadruple Sheet" and with "Quintuple Sheet."

A glance of other news is interesting. Considerable attention was given to sports and recreation, which may, at first glance seem strange, as we more or less assume that sports and recreation are a modernistic creation. Financial news appeared in abundance. We noted the sale, in a small display ad, of "Dakota Territory 5% Bonds."

Who was H. W. Weiss? His name appears, in bold and beautiful pencil writing on the upper right-hand corner of the New York Herald for two days as this newspaper carried valuable stories of the wreck. Probably the writing is that of a clerk in a drug store or news-stand—where?—reserving the paper for Mr. Weiss. The author of this study will appreciate any information as to the identity of H. W. Weiss.

All papers of that era used extremely small type. No effort was made to "streamline" pages. Type was so small in almost all newspapers as to constitute a real eye hazard. Sight-saving physicians and social workers would instantly rebel today at the over-use of such infinitesimal type. Small wonder, then, the reporters were enabled to market such long stories, which would be utterly impossible at present.

Advertising appeared on the first page of the New York Herald of August 12, 1887. There were ten banks of headlines over the Chatsworth Wreck article, with an excellent map. The Herald was to be congratulated for its accurate map. This writer could see no flaws in its map.

The Headlines.

The headlines read, "Plunging Down to Death"; "Peoria Weeps for Her Dead"; and "How the Train Met Death." The Herald gives the length

of the train as "six sleepers and 15 cars," a total of 21 coaches. The Herald also tells us that T., P. & W. officials were jubilant over the success of the train as it left Peoria. "It was their most successful excursion"—all right, says this author, so far, so good, at least as far as Chatsworth.

The Grief and Anxiety in Peoria.

Much space is given to the intensity of the excitement in Peoria concerning the wreck. There were 28 Peoria persons killed in the wreck, according to one commentator, as well as dozens injured.

Business was suspended and people went about the streets, to the newspaper offices, to the telegraph offices, and to the Union Station to secure news. One man said he went into a large store to make a purchase, and could find neither proprietor nor clerks. The store was open, but the personnel had fled to secure news.

The first train to arrive from the wreck scene was at 4 p. m. Thursday, but it brought in only dead bodies and many survivors, with few injured. A second train came in that evening. It is said that 5,000 people milled around the Union Station awaiting the trains. A number of Peoria physicians had been conveyed to the wreck scene with Dr. Dunkert mentioned as one of the first physicians to reach the wreck scene. Many names of people from Peoria and adjacent towns are mentioned, among them C. Filrath, of the Pardee-Day Company, dry-goods house. A Mrs. Neal, Mossville, was reported "quite dead."

The baggage of the victims of the wreck was removed, first to Chatsworth, and then to Peoria. "There were all kinds and conditions of valises and handbags from old, fat carpetbags to the neatest reticules." Contents were in fearful condition—dirty, torn, wet, and in utter turmoil.

Forty persons from Knox County, Ill., were victims of the wreck, with 20 from Galesburg, Ill.

The Peoria Transcript issued bulletins as rapidly as news could be secured, as the broken telegraph wire at Farmdale added to the confusion.

Mayor Samuel W. Kinsey, of Peoria, ordered handbills printed for circulation which called a special meeting of citizens Thursday evening at the city hall. The throngs were so large the meeting was moved to the court house lawn, with Judge Jones presiding. This meeting arranged for help for the injured in the wreck and for their families.

Many funeral services were held in Peoria, Sunday, August 14. "Corteges wound their dreary way all day Sunday to Springdale Cemetery." Many of the funerals in Peoria were long and impressive.

Robbery at the Wreck-Site.

The New York papers, especially, carried many thrilling stories of ghouls who pillaged the dead, the injured, and the baggage of both. This author has talked to Chatsworth people and they do not believe that robbers were present just after the wreck occurred.

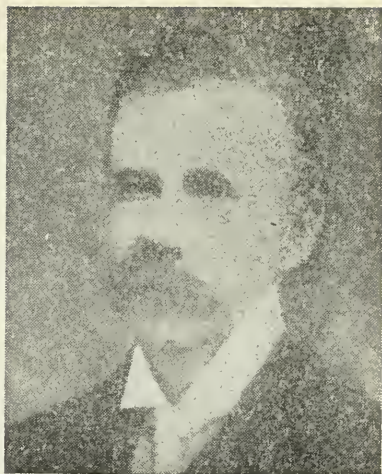
No doubt, a number of newspaper reporters made capital out of the possibility that robbers preyed upon the unfortunate victims of the wreck. This made a great story—coupled with the tales of the wreck itself.

Robbery was even assigned as the reason for the wreck. It was told that thieves knew of the movement of the excursion train, for it had been widely advertised, that they burned the bridge, with malice, just to create havoc and to rob the people who met either death or agonizing injuries.

This writer, after careful study, does not support the robbery motive for the catastrophe. He believes the fire which destroyed the bridge was one of many similar blazes which terrorized several states during the long drought and heat of the summer of 1887.

To the Right:

William McCambridge, of the night staff, Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph, in August, 1887. A telegraph operator, he caught the first incoherent reports of the wreck "off the wire" and wrote his own story. He had papers on the Bloomington streets by 6:00 a. m., "scooping" the New York and Chicago newspapers. This was one of the most famous newspaper "beats" in the Central West. In 1887, a man by the name of "William" was never called "Bill." He might be called "Billy," as was McCambridge, by close associates, but not by the general public.



No Planned Robbery at Wreck.

For these reasons, he believes that robbery was not the cause of the wreck nor does he believe that ghouls preyed upon the passengers. Anyone picking up a watch or a pocketbook or purse, to be turned in later, could have been declared a robber. Besides, how would the robbers have reached the site of the wreck? Obviously, on the train, as the excursion was open to all passengers. But how would these thieves have known that the wreck would occur? It is, of course, possible that there was some thieving at the wreck, but the reports of wholesale robberies cannot be supported by this writer. The wreck must be blamed upon weather conditions, rather than upon man; but this author still holds that more diligent patrols over wooden bridges in a period of all-out drought, would have averted the tragedy.

Pantagraph Gives Ample Coverage.

Bloomington, Ill., and Peoria, Ill., were the two nearest large cities to the site of the wreck. As a matter of fact there are no large towns or cities in the vicinity of Chatsworth. After leaving Peoria and Bloomington, one must travel northward in the state many miles before reaching Kankakee, Joliet and other sizeable communities.

The Pantagraph Thursday, August 11, emphasized the drought and heat, and loss of crops. Ironically, the next day, Friday, August 12 the Pantagraph gave the same space, and much more, to the catastrophe.

The Pantagraph "Scoop."

At this point, this writer wishes to comment, most favorably, on an interesting story associated with the Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph, one of the best small city newspapers in the United States, which he has heard throughout life. The story went that the Pantagraph "scooped" the press of the United States—Chicago. New York, all of the big papers—on the wreck story. However, the story has some qualifications.

The Pantagraph, a morning paper, was about "to be put to bed" when the Chatsworth aroused operator sent out his thrilling SOS call which electrified the world. This message was picked up by William McCambridge, of the Pantagraph night staff, who had learned telegraphy as a boy in Normal, Ill. McCambridge had a story, which he admitted was incoherent enough as everything was utter confusion at the wreck-site, ready for the Pantagraph and had the paper on the streets at 6:00 a. m. Thursday,

August 11, beating all metropolitan papers.

Limited Scoop Edition Apparently.

However, it must be noted that this must have been a limited edition scoop, for the *Pantagraph* of August 11, 1887, in the files of the great newspaper room of the University of Illinois, where this author has carefully studied that issue, carried only the story of the drought. No mention was made of the wreck. Apparently, the scoop of the *Pantagraph* must have been limited, possibly only to street sales or probably deliveries in Bloomington itself. The scoop did not reach into the mails, it seems.

The *Pantagraph* for August 12 carried approximately the same general news of the wreck as did the *New York*, *Chicago*, *St. Louis*, *Peoria* and other large papers. The facsimile of the *Pantagraph's* story in its Centennial Edition November 20, 1946, which this author has on his desk, is dated "Chatsworth, Ill., Aug. 11, 6 p. m.," which made it available only for the August 12 edition. But three cheers and nine raps for McCambridge and his scoop, even if "the beat" seemed apparently limited.

Responsibility for the Wreck.

In spite of the blistering editorials which this writer has read in various newspapers, including one attack upon the T., P. & W. railroad in a cable from London, England, he will attach no real blame at the door of the railroad officials.

There is no question the train was far too heavy to be moved as one unit. It is also said that Engineer McClintock remonstrated with Superintendent Armstrong, as the train was leaving Peoria, to divide the train—but to no avail. For that matter, the first section of the divided train would doubtless have gone through the burning, collapsing culvert bridge, which would doubtless have fallen, regardless of how the train might have been divided or "broken up" in railroad parlance.

Timber bridges were then in general use. The T., P. & W. has timber bridges in 1949 in the immediate vicinity of Fairbury, Ill., only a few miles from the wreck site. The special train on the Lake Erie and Western (now the Nickel Plate) a week later made the Niagara Falls trip with 20 coaches and 850 passengers over identical wooden bridges. Timber culverts and bridges were in common use at that time.

The author of this volume vividly recalls, in his boyhood, timber or wooden bridges at Farmer City, Ill., used by the Illinois Central and the present New York Central.

The summer was hot and dry. Prairie fires were reported even by the *New York* papers. Perhaps more diligence should have been used in keeping watchmen patrolling the tracks. This would have been expensive—but not nearly as expensive as the \$500,000 in damage suits filed against the T., P. & W. after the wreck.

Editorials on Responsibility.

The *Pantagraph* used many headings in its story, entitled "The Bridge of Death"; "A Graphic Description"; "First Car of Wounded"; and "Even in Her Cruelty Fate Was Lenient."

The *Pantagraph* also carried a blistering editorial on the responsibility for the wreck. "Who will be responsible here and in the hereafter?" "There was recklessness, carelessness and blundering by someone." This paper, in its August 12 issue, carried three columns on page 1 and four columns on page 4 and the last page. It gave the number of dead as 109.

This paper gave special attention to the scene in Chatsworth Thursday afternoon.

"No language will express the scene at Chatsworth. It was one huge hospital. The afternoon was an oppressive one, and people went about their work with an energy born of desperation. Six thousand people milled

THE BRIDGE OF DEATH.

The Narrative and Incident of the Most Dreadful Railway Disaster of the Nation's History.

The Chatsworth Horror Yields a List of More Than a Hundred Killed and Twice as Many Wounded.

The Disaster Believed to Have Been Brought About by a Prairie Fire Attacking and Weakening the Bridge.

Graphic Descriptions of the Wreck and of the Fatal and Heartrending Scenes Which Followed It.

The Prosecution of Engineer Watts Ours to Be vindicated Arranging Against Suing the People-Reader.

The Quest From Peoria—The Good Samaritans of Chatsworth—The Body-Hobbing Vanishes—Lists of the Dead and Wounded.

Special to Pantagraph.

CHATSWORTH, Ill., Aug. 11—6 p. m.—The accident was known in Chatsworth at 1 o'clock this morning, and a relief train started out. On the train were seven young ladies of Chatsworth and a few doctors. When they got to the scene it was a frightful one. Cars were piled on top of each other and everywhere, and victims who were not too badly hurt were crawling. Fortunately the bridge too was extinguished, else the fatality must have been larger. The train consisted of six day coaches, two chair cars, five sleepers, one baggage and one special.

J. R. KELLER, Galesburg, leg broken.
Wm. BARNES, Peoria, head crushed.
P. DEATY, Galesburg, badly burned.
A. SCHAFER, Peoria, legs injured internally.
H. ANKSTROM, Peoria, badly burned.
Wm. ROSS, Chatsworth, had internal injuries.
A. E. MOORE, LaHarpe, fractured leg.
J. BULLARD, Forrest, head bruised.
MISS CONNOR, Shawnee, bruised.
MISS COLVING, address unknown, bruised.
MISS NISMAN and son, Peoria, badly bruised.
MR. BOBBS, Morrison, badly bruised.
ED. E. POTNEY, Peoria, bruised.

THE DEAD.

It is a hard place of work to get the list of those dead. Everybody is wild and reports are legion. The following, however, are dead, the most of whom we have seen: MRS. CALVIN and two children, address unknown.
MAGGIE McVOY, Peoria.
MRS. MURPHY and daughters, Egan and Maggie, Peoria.
J. A. GREEN, address unknown.
MRS. HANCOY ALLEN and daughters, Eva and Minnie, West Point, Ia.
J. S. KELLY, Broome, Ill.
I. BARRY, address unknown.
IDA WEBSTER, Peoria.
W. H. LOTT, Shawnee.
F. ADAMS, Fairbury.
MRS. VAIL, Peoria.
MRS. H. B. MCCLURE, Keithsburg.
MAT. CASTLE, ex-postmaster, of El Paso.
MRS. MAHALA OLAY and two children, Bureau. Two other daughters are lying at the point of death in Elgin City.
MRS. HALL, Peoria.
REV. WM. COLLINS, Galesburg.
MR. GOSSEL, a Peoria butcher.
MRS. JAS. DEAL, Peoria.
MRS. E. E. PUTNEY, Peoria.
MRS. LIZZIE MANN, Peoria.
MISS MARIAN COON, Peoria.
Eighteen dead are unclaimed.
MRS. WM. ALLEN, Peoria.
P. F. WRIGHT, Peoria.
CAPT. DALLER, Peoria.
FRED WEINSTEIN, of the German insurance company, Peoria.
ENGINEER MCINTOCK, of Peoria. Had been on the road twenty years, starting as news agent. Was engineer of the second engine.
A man from Galesburg.
A man from Fort Madison, Ia., with a diamond pin in his shirt front.
MRS. AG. DUCKERT, of Forrest.
MR. and MRS. ZIMMERMAN, sr., of Peoria. He was a druggist.
JESSE MEEK, of Bureau, son of Judge Meek.

Headlines—Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph—August 11, 1887. The Famous "Scoop" Story.

The Pantagraph listed dead and injured from Peoria, Wyoming, Ill., Washington, Ill., Pontiac, Bushnell, Eu-

reka, Keithsburg, Jacksonville, Metamora and Abingdon, among Illinois communities.

through Chatsworth. Survivors of the wreck and the injured passed through a maelstrom more fearful than all of the whirling waters they were traveling to see. Samaritans were arranged for watches through the night."

Sunday was reported a quiet day in Chatsworth and Piper City, with even church services abandoned. It seemed that people were so stunned that they worshiped alone rather than in groups.

Investigation of Wooden Bridges.

The late Prof. I. O. Baker, for many years head of the department of civil engineering, University of Illinois, and president of the Illinois Society of Engineers in 1887, made an official inspection of the timber bridges on the T., P. & W. after the wreck, and declared that any one of them including the one which was burned, was safe for train use.

NEWSPAPER SIDELIGHTS UPON THE CHATSWORTH WRECK

The concern of this writer is that he cannot reproduce the language, not to mention all of the reports, of the many alert reporters who covered the Chatsworth Wreck. It would require many volumes, however, to reproduce these lengthy and detailed reports. Besides, many of them are repetitions and included stories which were doubtless "pooled" by reporters to make their stories vivid and exciting.

The question may well be asked, 62 years later, if the newspaper reporters sent to the wrecksite enlarged upon or magnified their stories. This might have been—may well have been—true, for reporters' imaginations were as lively in 1887 as in 1949. But if some versions or angles of the stories were magnified or enlarged, then other aspects were minimized.

Certainly—like the Queen of Sheba ushered into the glory of King Solomon so many centuries ago, who exclaimed "The half has not been told"—just so, we may record, six decades afterwards, that regardless of some

overdrawn statements at the time of the wreck, that not one-half of the suffering and the misery of 81 or 85 persons killed and almost 400 injured was known, that "the half has never yet been told." Such a complete story cannot be related — even today this author has only attempted, after all, a review of the excursion train and the famous wreck of 1887.

The New York Herald in 1887 sold for two cents. It carried its "Whole Number" of daily papers printed at 18,616. How does this compare with newspaper circulation in 1949 and 1950?

Want ads were carried on the front page, also "A Directory for Advertisers."

Among news stories headlined were "Frederick Hopt executed by shooting at Salt Lake City"; "Honor to Henry Watterson," (recalled as the famous "Massa" Henry Watterson, editor for many years of the famous Louisville Courier-Journal); "American Advances in Science"; "President Cleveland in West Virginia," and "Grand Fishing Again."

The financial failure of Henry S. Ives was noted in an item, "Ives Goes Under." He was called "The Napoleon of Finance."

Five columns were devoted to "Special News of Baseball and Yachting." Much attention was given to tennis and racing. Who says there were no sports in 1887?

"Fate was lenient, for she willed that most of those who were killed in the wreck should die instantly," commented one reporter.

One man who was rescued from a horrible death from being burned alive when the wreckage caught fire, complained that his watch had been stolen.

"The engineer saw, to his horror, a burning bridge ahead. Death, and a dreadful death, was therefore inexorable," wrote one reporter.

"All the railway horrors in the history of this country were surpassed three miles east of Chatsworth, Ill.," wailed another writer.

"All sorts of people took advantage of the low-cost excursion," telegraphed a reporter to his paper. This statement may lend some credence to the claims of robbery at the wrecksite, a debatable question throughout the decades since, but now largely discounted as improbable, except in a few isolated cases.

"The run from Forrest to Chatsworth, six miles, was made in seven minutes, so the terrible momentum of these 17 coaches and two locomotives shooting along at the rate of a mile a minute can be understood. No stop was made at Chatsworth (undoubtedly not true.) On sped the heavy train with its living freight, through the darkness of the night," was a reporter's observation.

"Financial and Commercial News" appeared large in the New York newspapers in the summer of 1887. "Shipping News" with reports of the Port of New York, including names of vessels "arrived, cleared and sailed," was prominent. "Notices to Mariners" were also in evidence.

"Strong men grew sick. The smell of warm human blood caused many to grow faint. Dead men and women were seen hanging through the windows or holes in the sides of coaches. There was very little water to be had," wrote another overwhelmed reporter.

Delegations of the Red Men's lodge and The Ancient Order of United Workmen, Peoria, rushed to the site of the wreck, to aid the injured.

"After eight o'clock in the morning, there were plenty of people to do the work that needed such-prompt attention. Kind-hearted women drove in from miles-around to give their gentle ministrations to the suffering."

If there were ghouls at the wreck, one writer called them, contemptuously, "Human Hyenas." One reporter claimed they even took the shoes which covered the feet of the victims. "Who these wretches are is not known. Was it their devilish act which deliberately wrecked the train?" They stripped the wretches of watches and jewelry and even searched their pockets for money. These hyenas even searched dead bodies" was wired from the wrecksite. "Sixteen empty purses were found in one heap. Had the plunderers been caught they would surely have been lynched."

Visiting the wreck as officials of the State of Illinois were Commissioner John R. Renaker, of the Illinois State Railroad and Warehouse Commission; Jesse Rogers, Captain B. F. Marsh, John R. Tanner (inaugurated governor of Illinois in January, 1897); John Bunn and "several other gentlemen from Springfield"

Dr. O. B. Will, Peoria, said to be the only physician on the wrecked train, carried his surgical instruments with chloroform and stimulants. "His wife induced him to take them along."

Hats, coats, valises, shoes, ladies' underwear, many other items of clothing, were found strewn about the wreck in utter confusion. "The travelers seemed to be well-to-do people," commented one reporter.

Among communities in Illinois which contributed passengers to the ill-fated train were Pekin, Canton, Cuba, Metamora, Mossville, Eureka, Brimfield, Washington, Bushnell, Galesburg, Green Valley, Jacksonville, Bloomington, Tonica, Deer Creek, Glasford, Tremont, La Harpe, Keithsburg, Henry, Chillicothe, Lacon, Minonk, an almost endless list of towns.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for weak and ailing women was highly advertised. Note the recent current biography entitled "Lydia Pinkham Is Her Name," by Jean Bur-

ton; published by Farrar, Straus & Co., New York. The Compound was sold at \$1 a bottle—six bottles for \$5. "I'll sell you six for a V," said the corner druggist.

"If you are tired all over—try Hood's Sarsaparilla," ran one advertisement.

Railroad time cards and steamship sailings were carried as vital news by the New York papers. Railroad timetables were published in American newspapers for many years — disappeared about the time of the First World War.

Obituaries were really obituaries in the 1880s. It was really worth dying in 1887 to have a lengthy, tearful obituary written about your many fine qualities, and which tactfully omitted all references to your many deficiencies.

"How England Will Fall," was the subject of a scholarly editorial in the Chicago Tribune. Perhaps the writer was right, after all. Many people in 1949 are predicting that England will yet fall. We know that the pound has fallen, at least.

"The German Is Our Enemy" was the title of another 1887 editorial. This was prophetic, for we found this true in 1917 and again in 1941.

WRECK RECALLED FOR YEARS BY CURRENT NEWSPAPERS

For many years, even to the 60th anniversary of the Chatsworth Wreck, many Central Illinois, and even nationally circulated newspapers, noted the week of August 10-11 as the period to recall the Chatsworth Wreck.

Much attention, naturally, was given the semi-centennial of the anniversary of the wreck, August 11, 1937, in Chatsworth, Ill. Newspapers throughout Illinois and the Central West commented upon the 50th anniversary of the tragedy. The Chatsworth Plaindealer, in a special commemorative issue, noted the passing of a half-century of time since the catastrophe. The Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph also

noted the anniversary, as did many other newspapers.

Each year, for many decades, the newspapers of the general area, commented upon perhaps the 47th or the 51st anniversary of the wreck. However, with the passing of time, the deaths of survivors, and of those who recalled the wreck as children or youths, the newspapers began to pay less and less attention to the anniversary. Like other tragic events, it began to slip into the realm of historic episodes—which is precisely the reason for compiling this book review of the great wreck. The time has now come to perpetuate this tragedy in permanent form, which we are now doing.

The Champaign, Ill., News-Gazette, August 11, 1946, noted, in a special story, written by its Watseka, Ill., correspondent, a review of the tragedy. It mentioned, especially, Jesse Smith, Watseka, who was able to reproduce, from memory, at least two verses of the song, "The Bridge Was Burned at Chatsworth." This story relates that verses were added constantly to the song by keen minds and that the song passed into folklore, much like "The Shooting of Dan McGrew."

This story also commented upon the fact that on the evening of August 5, 1919, a westbound train on the T., P. & W. struck and killed Mrs. Florence Fisher, wife of Webster Fisher, Pittwood, Ill., who was crossing the tracks in "an old Maxwell touring car." The engineer on this train was none other than David Sutherland, Peoria, Ill., who was engineer of the first locomotive on the wreck train, 32 years previously, which had struck the burned culvert bridge, and after losing its tender, managed to speed on to Piper City to sound the alarm of the wreck. Sutherland was still active in 1919 and was at his post of duty 32 years later. It is interesting, but sad, to think that his engine should cause this unfortunate accident in Watseka, almost 32 years to a day following the Chatsworth Wreck.

The Champaign News-Gazette headed its excellent story, "Chatsworth Wreck Anniversary. Excitement Ran High 49 Years Ago, in This Territory." It also mentioned that Wilbur Hathaway, then employed in the Watseka post office, was eight years of age at the time of the wreck. He was then living at Gilman, Ill., and with older persons, was taken to view the wreck. Hathaway could be plainly discerned in an old-time photograph taken at the wreckside.

C. C. Burford, Urbana, Ill., author of this volume, prepared a two-column review of the wreck for the Fairbury, Ill., Blade, which was published in that newspaper the week of August 11, 1947, or exactly 60 years after the Chatsworth tragedy. Through error, this article was credited to Congressman Leslie C. Arends, Melvin, Ill., who had, as it happened, another communication that week in the Blade. This was one of the last extended reviews of the wrecks to be published in newspaper form.

The coming of World War II caused the Chatsworth wreck to be dropped as historic reminders of the wreck. There was too much current news—most of it tragic, indeed, to be recorded in the grim war years. Therefore, we again repeat, with the dropping of this story as newspaper comments, following 1941, the necessity of preserving an account of it in book form became more necessary. Hence—we repeat—this printed book preservation of one of the most historic events in the annals of American railroading is important.

"FIRED" FOR ENGINEER SUTHERLAND

Emil Herberich, Chenoa, Ill., who has been tenant for 30 years on the Dr. Otis Hamilton farm southeast of Chenoa, Ill., served as fireman on several passenger train trips on the T., P. & W. railroad between Peoria and Effner, Ill., while Engineer David Sutherland, who was engineer on the double-headed fleet of locomotives pulling the excursion train which plunged into the burned culvert east of Chatsworth 62 years ago, was still serving as engineer. Herberich was an extra fireman and did not remain on the rails too long, preferring a farm.

He is retiring from the farm and will locate in Forrest, Ill., after January 1, 1950.

As a Babe, Escaped Wreck With Parents Killed.

Fred Roberts, a resident of Champaign, Ill., for a number of years, survived, as a baby, the Chatsworth Wreck, although his parents were killed. He was, according to the story which was told him of the tragedy, thrown clear of the actual wrecked coaches. For a number of years, he was a barber in the Hotel Beardsley, now Hotel Tilden Hall, Champaign. Later, he studied osteopathy at the American College of Osteopathy, Kirksville, Mo. His wife also studied osteopathy and is now engaged in practice in Missouri. Mr. Roberts is deceased.

CHAPTER TEN

Interviews With Persons Who Recall the Wreck.

Mrs. Gertrude Page, residing at the Hotel Fairbury, Fairbury, Ill., was seven years of age at the time of the tragedy. Her childhood home was just across the field from the wreck. Her father was Joseph Morris and he and his three sons, J. W. Morris, E. A. Morris and A. W. Morris, and two daughters, Mrs. Emma Morris Davis and Mrs. Bess Morris Everitt, aided valiantly in caring for the injured until all were removed and cared for. The dead were first laid out in Joseph Morris' field. Gertrude Morris Page was too small to be of service at the wreck. Her mother permitted her to sit on a chair at the window and watch the work at the wreck. She recalls that she became so ill and excited that she fainted and fell off the chair. Her father, the late Dr. J. C. Page, practiced dentistry in Fairbury for thirty years.

This writer, accompanied by his friend, Ben Nussbaum, Fairbury, Ill., visited with Edward A. Morris, brother of Mrs. Gertrude Page, when he was employed in the west grain elevator in Fairbury a few years ago. Mr. Morris's recollections were most vivid as he was 13 years of age at the time of the wreck. He heard the crash and ran across the field to the site, being one of the first persons, not aboard the train itself, to lend a hand to the succor of the injured. Mr. Morris has passed away since this interview. Indeed, the hand of Time is moving swiftly against those who were even children at the time of the wreck. Tempus fugit—it is altogether too true.

Stories of the Wreck.

Stories of the wreck are recalled in 1940 by many persons living in Chatsworth, Piper City, Forrest, Fairbury, other towns in the general area of the wreck. Even the passing of 62 winters and summers has not dimmed the recollections of many of these fine folks, for impressions made in child-

hood or in youth remain with us. Long-fellow says, "The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." People do remember the events of childhood and youth.

Two youths were waiting at the Piper City station of the T., P. & W. to board the excursion train for Niagara Falls — the train which never came, indeed. One young man was Will O. McKinney, who was wearing a new suit, just for the occasion. He was accompanied by Will Rice, who was also waiting for the train. The lads varied their waiting by sitting on the stepping-block (in front of one of their adjacent homes), the type used in the horse-and-buggy days when ladies dismounted from carriages upon blocks or platforms. They returned to the depot when they thought their train was about due to arrive. Looking down the track in the direction from where their train would come, they suddenly saw a flash of light. It was the wreck. They saw the first locomotive come roaring into Piper City. The story goes that McKinney and Rice went on the handcar to the site of the wreck. Obviously, McKinney ruined that fine new suit in helping at the wreck.

Miss Mary Montelius.

Miss Mary Montelius, daughter of the late John A. Montelius, Piper City grain merchant and leading citizen for many years, is residing in the house, one block south of the Main street of Piper City, in which she was born and where she has lived her entire life. She was a child eight years of age at the time of the wreck. Her father had sustained a fractured leg in a runaway accident a week before the wreck, having been dragged over the dashboard by the frightened team. It was impossible for him, of course, to go to the wreck. A neighbor, George Campbell, ran to the Montelius home at 3 a. m., after the tragedy, and told them the sad news. The child, Mary

Montelius, had been sleeping that hot night on the floor. She rolled off her pallet, when the family was awakened, felt lost, did not know where she was, and began to cry. Her mother lighted the kerosene lamp and comforted the child.

Improvised Hospital.

Miss Montelius recalls that the Masonic hall in Piper City was used as a suddenly improvised hospital for "the wounded." She was sent to the hospital the next morning with some light supplies which she could carry. Her father, obviously, could not go because of his broken leg, and her mother did not wish to leave her husband, hence the child was sent. She carried some light blankets. She recalls that there were three rows of mattresses in the Masonic hall, each row filled with injured. Piper City people gave up their own mattresses for the injured, also provided food, medicines, etc.

Mrs. Alex Smart Campbell.

Mrs. Alex Smart Campbell, wife of the banker, was also sent, as a child, to take supplies to the hospital in the Masonic hall in Piper City. There were board walks then in the village and a board broke, throwing her down and injuring her leg. She was carrying some whisky. She began to cry, but some men called out to her, "Never mind your leg, get up to the hall with that whisky." Truly, relief to the really injured was more important than a child's mere aching leg.

Bishop-Rice.

Edward E. Bishop, now living near Piper City, was a youth at the time of the wreck. He and neighbors went to the wreck in a "Democrat wagon," a spring wagon with two seats.

Frank L. Rice, Piper City, was a lad 14 years of age when the wreck occurred. His family home was four miles south of Piper City. Isolated on a farm, they knew nothing that night of the wreck. They noted, however, many teams and wagons passing their

house the morning of August 11, as people here and there had learned of the accident. Finally, with so many teams passing, his father went to the roadside and asked a man, who was driving by, what was the cause of the spurt in travel. Rice's father was then told of the wreck. They hitched up a team to a wagon and went to the wreck, reaching there about 2 p. m.

Other Piper City People Reach Wreck.

Mrs. Lewis Andrews, who was Miss Agnes F. Jackson, born in Canada, of Scotch descent, was living with her husband on a farm almost within sight of the wreck. A neighbor came by and took him to the wreck, almost immediately after it happened. Mrs. Andrews, who was living in August, 1949, in Piper City at the age of 91 years, recalls the excitement of the wreck most distinctly as she was then a married woman about 30 years of age. Their farm home was filled with injured.

Stories are legion of people doing everything possible towards being of service to the wreck victims. One man, it is said, upon hearing the injured were in urgent need of water, started to the wreck-site, a considerable distance, carrying a pail of water. A number of farmers, with the best of intentions, tried hauling barrels of water in wagons or spring wagons to the wreck. Obviously, with muddy roads, following the heavy rain after the wreck occurred, most of the water splashed out of the barrels before arriving at the wreck.

Recollections of Two El Paso Passengers.

R. N. West and James A. Smith, Jr., both of El Paso, recall the wreck very well. Smith was the son of the mayor of Chatsworth at the time of the wreck, and the editor of the Chatsworth Plaindealer, which is being published today by S. J. Porterfield, and is an excellent weekly newspaper.

Mr. West and Mr. Smith remember that Albert E. Fleming and Lewis M.

Kerr, both of El Paso, were Pullman car passengers on the wrecked train, but their car, as noted, remained on the track. Uninjured, Fleming and Kerr assisted Dr. E. P. Hazen, Ft. Madison, Iowa, a dentist, who was on the train with his wife and a cousin on the long, long walk into Chatsworth in the dark. They stopped at the depot and talked, as they recalled, with the night operator. L. J. Haberkorn, Chatsworth, recalls that the agent or operator had been called from his home, and was not on duty at the time of the wreck. Stories of the wreck show, of course, many differences in details, but this is to be expected. The operator became so nervous and excited, over his work that he could not handle his key, whereupon Fleming, an operator himself, took over and sent out the first message of the tragedy.

Fleming and Kerr related that they found the night watchman who ran to Mayor Smith's home, and the mayor told him to ring the firebell and sound the alarm. Mr. Haberkorn says that he rang the firebell. One story went that Fleming broke into the depot, but J. A. Smith, Jr., says that this was not true, that the operator was on duty, had doubtless been called by Mr. Haberkorn. Most of the evidence points to the fact that there was no night operator on duty, at least, after the excursion train passed Chatsworth. The fact that Mr. and Mrs. T. Y. Brown, Chatsworth, had planned to take the excursion train but had changed their plans, would indicate either that the depot was open, with probably an agent or operator on duty, or that they could flag the train with a lantern.

Albert E. Fleming is now deceased, and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, El Paso, Ill. Mr. Kerr was later postmaster at El Paso.

HOME DUTIES PREVENTED MAXWELLS FROM TAKING THE EXCURSION TRAIN

Ernest Maxwell, a member of the staff of the Fairbury Blade, publishers

of this volume, was born four and one-half miles west of Fairbury, in the edge of McLean County, Ill. His parents' home was just a half mile west of the Livingston-McLean county line which, at that point, runs north and south.

His parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Maxwell, had planned during the summer of 1887, to make the trip to Niagara Falls upon the highly advertised excursion train. Some event happened, probably of home or farm importance, which detained them. They cancelled their plans for making the trip.

However, they were much interested, as were so many people at that time, in the widely acclaimed special excursion train, that they remained up that evening to see the train pass within a few hundred feet of their home, on the north side of the "Tip-Up" track. Naturally, they regretted when they watched the long train pass with many coaches at least dimly lighted, that they had not been able to make the trip, then announced as one of the travel opportunities of the summer.

With no telephones, the Maxwells did not learn of the wreck until the second morning after it happened. They were too far from the wreck-site to see people driving by in their buggies, carriages and wagons, as did people near Chatsworth and Piper City; and, moreover, their home did not face directly upon the public highway, being in the center of the section. It was not until a number of hours later that they heard of the wreck. Naturally, again, they then congratulated themselves that home duties had prevented them from being passengers on the ill-fated train.

Charles A. Kiler, Champaign, Ill., Recalls Wreck.

Charles A. Kiler, prominent retired business man of Champaign, Ill., and leading alumnus of the University of Illinois, was a youth in Champaign at the time of the wreck. His friend, the late Fred Hassel, had a fleet driving

horse. Hessel asked Kiler to drive with him to the site of the wreck, which had assumed the full attention of people in all Central Illinois towns such as Champaign. The trip would have required three days at least, for even fast little driving horses needed time between trips for rest. Kiler was unable to go, as he held a position. Kiler cannot recall whether Hessel made the trip or not.

Recalled by Mrs. Mercer Davis.

Mrs. Mercer Davis, of Bloomington, who spent her pre-marriage days in Fairbury, was a small girl about nine years old at the time of the wreck. She had spent the previous night with some friends in the country. Returning August 11, she went into the yard where her mother was hanging out clothes. Mrs. Davis remembers her mother telling a neighbor woman what a terrible thing had happened the night before. "The train was wrecked at Chatsworth and a lot of people killed." Mrs. Davis' father, the late A. G. Phelps, was among the many from Fairbury who drove to the scene of the wreck to render assistance.

Frank Phelps, brother of Mrs Davis, is a member of the firm of The Blade Publishing Company, Fairbury, Ill., printers of this volume. He and his twin sister, Chicago, were born a few months following the wreck.

T. J. PATTERSON, FAIRBURY, RECALLS WRECK

T. J. Patterson, Fairbury, Ill., a brother of James A. Patterson, for many years editor of the Fairbury Blade, vividly recalls the great wreck. A lad in his upper-teens, he rode a pony from Fairbury to the site of the wreck and aided in caring for the injured.

DEATH OF A WRECK SURVIVOR

Anthony T. Labood, aged 80, one of the few survivors of the Chatsworth wreck, died in Peoria, Ill., within recent years—unfortunately we do not have the exact date of his passing. He was one of the first Syrians to locate in Peoria. For many years he was engaged in the confectionery business

in Peoria. He was a passenger on the Niagara Falls excursion train which was wrecked east of Chatsworth, Ill., to make history.

GUY McILVAIN SMITH, DANVILLE, RECALLS INCIDENTS OF WRECK

Guy McIlvain Smith, 109 Townsend Street, Danville, Ill., co-author with C. C. Burford, Urbana, Ill., author of this volume, in their 1942 book, "The History and Romance of Danville Junction," a busy transfer station in the northeastern part of Danville to 1919, carries many recollections of "The Chatsworth Wreck." Mr. Smith was an active railroad man and railway postal clerk in the 1890s and until his retirement in the 1930s. His memory is amazingly accurate. His cooperation in "The Junction Book" was especially valuable. This volume has been proclaimed by students of railroad history as one of the best pictures of mass travel on local passenger trains of the 1890s and the 1900s ever published.

Mr. Smith, in 1904, then engaged in railway work at Danville Junction, had a long talk with Dr. Armstrong, Peoria, Ill., local surgeon for the T., P. & W. at Peoria, at the time of the tragedy, and who was rushed, with seven or eight other physicians, on a special train to the scene of the horror.

Mr. Smith also knew Joe Otto, chief clerk to J. C. Muir, of the C. & E. I. railroad at Danville for many years. Otto's father was boss of "the section" in which the timber culvert burned, causing the wreck. Joe Otto, resident of Danville for many years, a former member of the Danville city council, now lives in Hammond, Ind.

The late Dr. Fred R. McLean, Danville, boarded the ill-fated train with a boyhood friend at Bushnell, Ill. Arriving at the Union Station in Peoria, McLean got off to buy sandwiches in the depot dining room and lingered to sip coffee. The result—the excursion train pulled out without McLean. He was disappointed in not getting his summer trip to Niagara Falls. But his life was saved — his friend, who remained aboard the train, met death.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Last Roundup.

The Bloomington Pantagraph carried Thursday, August 11, 1949, a story by Faye Shafer, its Chatsworth correspondent, on the wreck. Miss Shafer worked diligently to assemble the facts for this excellent review, also prepared an account of the last reunion of the survivors of the wreck, which was held in the park in Chatsworth, August 10, 1957.

The survivors of the famous Chatsworth Wreck held annual reunions until 1937. They had formed many friendships and these deepened through the passing years. They were happy to see each other at these annual events.

There is that certain loyalty to each other which abides in the hearts of people who had lived through terrorizing experiences. Civil War veterans rejoiced in their frequent reunions which they called "Camp-Fires," reliving their terrible experiences. Veterans of the Argonne in World War I love to recall their exciting events, and survivors of Okinawa never tire of meeting their comrades again and recounting the thrilling moments and hours of World War II. There is that just something about having "been there," which brings instant response from the souls of men and women who walked together through the same dark valley of the shadow of death. There is that loyalty to each other which cannot be explained—but it is there just the same.

The last reunion was held, as noted, in the public park at Chatsworth Thursday, August 10, 1937, with nine survivors present. They were: George A. Smith and Louis E. Retterman, Peoria, Ill.; B. M. Judd, Colfax, Ill.; E. F. Swearingen, Canton, Ill.; Mrs. Mary R. Barran and Mrs. W. K. Sharp, Pontiac, Ill.; B. F. Quisenberry, Atlanta, Ill.; W. B. McDonough, Macomb, Ill.; and A. T. Cunningham, Chatsworth, Ill.

A group of 200 people assembled to bid these hardy survivors welcome to the reunion. L. J. Haberkorn, who just missed being in the wreck, but who was one of the first men to reach the terrible carnage, was chairman.

The always lovely sacred song, "Nearer My God to Thee," which was being sung by four young people in the train at the zero moment of the crash, was sung by a quartet composed of Mrs. Alfred Wisthuff, Mrs. Phil Koerner, Albert Walter and J. W. Heiken, as the theme song of the final reunion. The chairman and the quartet were seated in the bandstand in the park.

Program of Last Reunion.

Dr. John Ryan gave a report on the wreck. He was living in Colfax, Ill., a few miles southwest of Chatsworth, and rode across the country in a buggy with a Colfax physician when news came of the tragedy. Both men worked heroically when they reached the wreck.

The survivors were taken to the site of the wreck in automobiles for their last survey of the locale which carried for them so many terrible memories.

Mrs. Barron, who was 89 years of age at the time of the last reunion, related that she was accompanied on the ill-fated train by her son, then six years of age, but he had passed away before the last reunion, dying, indeed, before his mother.

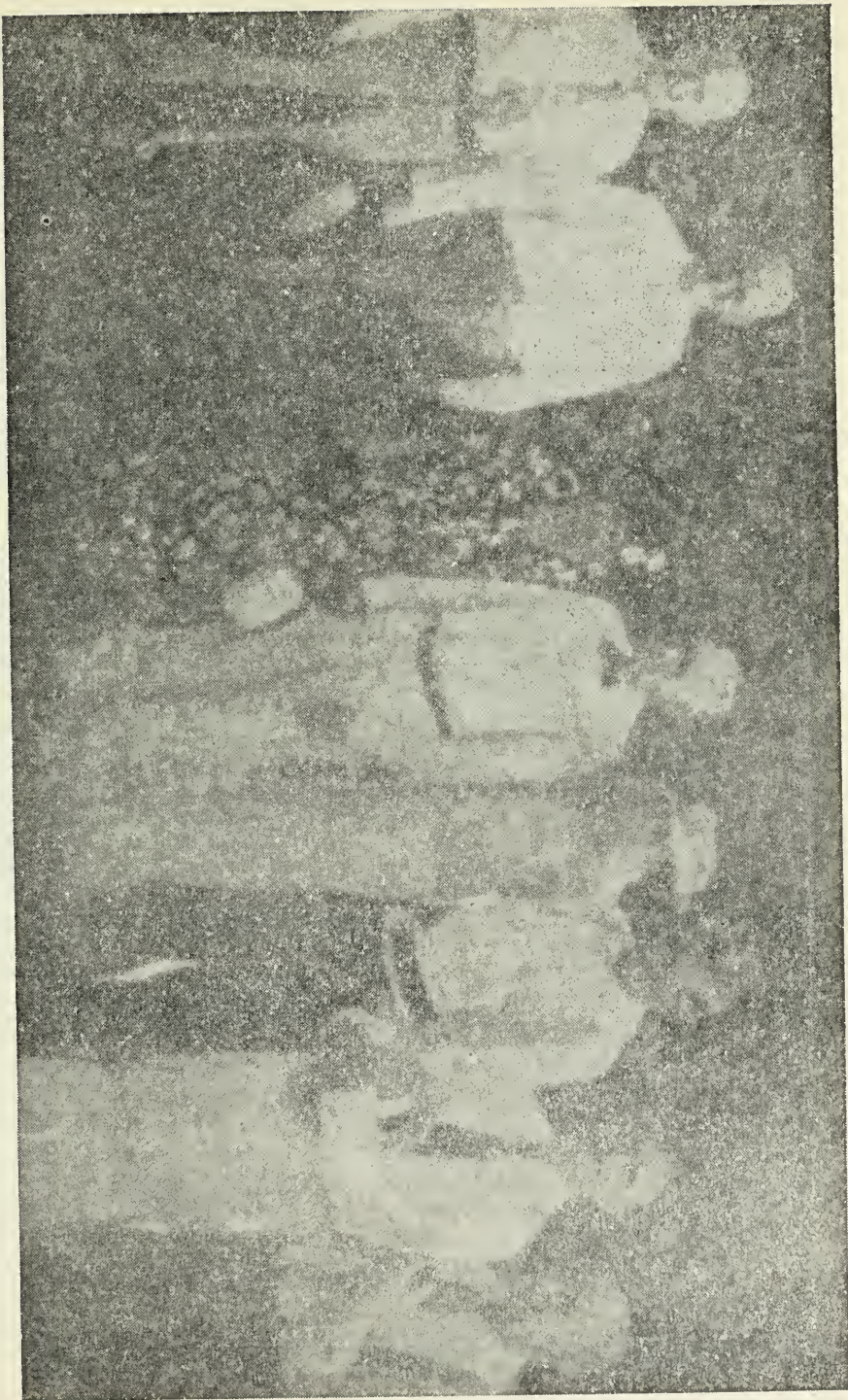
It is believed that 1949 will find no living survivors of the actual wreck. If any of them are living, we will be happy to hear from them, or from their children or friends if the survivors are not able to write.

The hand of Father Time moves relentlessly along. A man or a woman in the full bloom of their early maturity at the approximate age of 30 at

The Survivors at the Last Reunion.
Survivors of the wreck at their last reunion, held August 12, 1937, or 50 years after the tragedy, at Chatsworth, Ill.

Left to right: E. F. Swearingen, Canton, Ill.; R. F. Quisenberry, Atlanta, Ill.; Mrs. Mary Barran, Pontiac, Ill.; B. M. Judd, Colfax, Ill.; W. K. Sharp, Pontiac, Ill.; A. T. Cunningham, Chats-

worth, Ill.; Louis E. Retterman, Peoria, Ill.; and George A. Smith, Peoria, Ill. It is related that William B. McDonough, Macomb, Ill., "was present but was cruelly cut out of the picture by the camera lens."



the time of the fatal wreck in 1887 would be, obviously, 92 years of age in 1949. It is believed we are correct in our statement that there is no one living today who is an actual survivor of the wreck itself. Even those like Miss Montelius, H. S. Davis, Frank L. Rice, L. J. Haberkorn, Mrs. Gertrude Page, Edward E. Bishop and others to whom this author has talked, who were children or youths at the time of the catastrophe cannot lay claim to being young, by any means, today. They love to recount memories of those August days of 1887 when their small Illinois communities became nationally and even internationally famous because of man's blundering and the occurrence of one of the worst wrecks in the history of American railroading.

Where Did Survivors Board Train?

It is interesting to inquire where these survivors of the wrecked train had boarded it. The Canton, Peoria and Chatsworth passengers took the train at their home communities. Mr. Judd might have traveled the Illinois Central branch line from Colfax, Ill., to Chatsworth, taking the train at Chatsworth. If so, he had only been a passenger for a few minutes when the wreck occurred. Or, he might have driven in a buggy "overland," as the expression was used, and might have boarded the train at Fairbury. Mr. Quisenberry, Atlanta, Ill., and the two Pontiac women, doubtless took the train at Chenoa, Ill. Mr. McDonough, Macomb, Ill., probably boarded the train at Bushnell, Ill., only a few miles from Macomb.

In 1887, it was assumed that "changing cars" was a rule of traveling, whe-

ther on a journey of only a few miles, or on the first leg of an extended trip, as the Niagara Falls excursion. Throughout this volume this writer has endeavored to emphasize the modes of traveling and of living in the general period of the 1880s. "Changing cars" was then an accepted order of almost any trip.

Valuable Historical Data Disappeared.

The Chatsworth Plaindealer in its issue of August 12, 1937, carried an excellent story of "the last round-up" with a group picture of the nine survivors, Mr. Haberkorn, Dr. Ryan and a few others. We have incorporated into this volume all of the facts of the Plaindealer's story.

Most unfortunately, many of the features have been destroyed over the years, just as Civil War historians now doing their best work upon that great tragedy and upon the life of Abraham Lincoln, find many tidbits of rare historical value gone with the winds of many intervening years. In fact, the best scholarship of the Civil War and Lincoln period, has been placed into type within the years 1930-1949, and not during the first decades after the war itself. In brief, historical perspective is increased, certainly not decreased, with the passing of years. It may be we have made our contribution to "The Chatsworth Wreck" in this late hour of 1949—and not when we were a lad in Central Illinois and heard our elders excitedly talking over a span of 20 years, the tragedy on the Illinois prairie which agonized the hearts of strong men and sympathetic women.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MAJOR RAILROAD WRECKS OF THE UNITED STATES

Date—Location—Number of Lives Lost.	
December 29, 1876—Ashtabula, Ohio— 84 lives.	50 lives.
August 10, 1887—Chatsworth, Ill.—81 lives.	December 23, 1926—Rockmont, Ga. — 20 lives.
October 10, 1888 — Mud Run, Pa.—55 lives.	June 19, 1938—Miles City, Mont. — 46 lives.
August 7, 1904—Eden, Colo.—96 lives.	August 13, 1939 — Carlin, Nev. — 24 lives.
March 16, 1906—Florence, Colo. — 35 lives.	April 19, 1940—Little Falls, N. Y.—30 lives.
December 30, 1906—Washington, D. C. —53 lives.	July 31, 1940—Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio— 43 lives.
January 7, 1907—Volland, Kansas—33 lives.	November 9, 1941—Dunkirk, Ohio—12 lives.
January 19, 1907 — Fowler, Ind., 29 lives.	September 24, 1942—Dickerson, Md.— 14 lives.
February 16, 1907—New York City— 22 lives.	May 23, 1943—Delair, N. J.—14 lives.
March 23, 1907—Colton, Cal.—26 lives.	August 29, 1943—Wayland, N. J.—29 lives.
July 20, 1907—Salem, Mich.—33 lives.	September 8, 1943 — Frankfort Junc- tion, Philadelphia, Pa.—79 lives.
March 1, 1910—Wellington, Wash.—96 lives.	December 16, 1943—Lumberton, N. C. —72 lives.
March 21, 1910—Green Mountain, Iowa —55 lives.	July 6, 1944—High Bluff, Tenn — 35 lives.
August 26, 1911—Canandaigua, N. Y. —27 lives.	August 4, 1944 — Stockton, Ga. — 47 lives.
July 4, 1912—Corning, N. Y.—40 lives.	September 14, 1944—Dewey, Ind. — 29 lives.
September 2, 1913—Wallingford, Conn. —21 lives.	December 31, 1944—Bagley, Utah—50 lives.
October 19, 1913—Buctaunn ² , Miss.— 23 lives.	June 19, 1945—Milton, Pa.—19 lives.
August 5, 1914—Tipton Ford, Mo.—40 lives.	August 9, 1945—Michigan, N. D. — 34 lives.
March 29, 1916—Amherst, O.—28 lives	April 26, 1946 — Naperville, Ill. — 47 lives.
February 27, 1917—Penn, Pa.—20 lives.	December 13, 1946—Guthrie, Okla.—19 lives.
December 20, 1917—Louisville, Ky.—41 lives.	February 18, 1947—Gallilzin, Pa. — 24 lives.
June 22, 1918—Ivanhoe, Ind.—68 lives.	January 1, 1948—Syracuse, Mo. — 14 lives.
July 9, 1918—Nashville, Tenn. — 115 lives.	
January 12, 1919—South Byron, N. Y. —21 lives.	
February 27, 1921—Porter, Ind. — 37 lives.	
August 6, -922—Surphur Springs, Mo. —40 lives.	
September 27, 1923—Casper, Wyo.—37 lives.	
June 17, 1925—Hackettstown, N. J.—	

An additional serious loss of life, with 34 casualties incurred, was a train wreck at Almonte, Ontario, Canada, December 27, 1942.

This list was taken from the World Almanac, 1949, and is believed as correct as statistics may go.

Variations in Figures.

However, there are variations in reports, in the accuracy with which the reports were kept and were filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission. Also, variations in dates may raise or lower the number of lives lost, as deaths would follow serious injuries within a few hours, days or weeks.

This author has always considered the number of lives lost in the Chatsworth Wreck as 85 and those lost in the Nashville Wreck during World War I, as 119, most of them soldiers. He has also considered the Chatsworth Wreck the second most serious in number of lives lost. But, taking the above list of statistics, the Chatsworth Wreck with 81 casualties, would rank fourth, being outranked by the Ashtabula Wreck, with 84 dead; the Wellington, Wash., Wreck, with 96 lives; and the Nashville, Tenn., Wreck, with 115 casualties.

This author was referred to the World Almanac by Harry B. Comstock, author of the magazine, "Railroad," published at 205 East 42nd St., New York City 17. We were unable to secure a list of Wrecks and casualties from the Association of American Railroads, Washington, D. C.

We assume the statistics found in the World Almanac are as accurate as may be cited anywhere. It all depends upon the accuracy of reports filed and in the timing of the reports after a wreck. A delay of a week or two would make a difference in the number of casualties. We must also bear in mind, too, that the Interstate Commerce Commission has required more accurate reports within the years after 1920 than were demanded, say, in 1837, at the time of the Chatsworth Wreck, if, indeed, they were required at all.

However, no one can glory or take pride in any list of the dead, from whatever cause. If the Chatsworth Wreck must stand fourth, instead of second, we are just that much happier

that more lives were not lost in the Chatsworth Wreck and that the figure of 85 is a trifle too high. But with our study of the Chatsworth Wreck extended over several years, we are inclined to believe that the number of 85 is more nearly correct, making the Chatsworth disaster the third worst wreck in the United States.

It must also be borne in mind that methods of keeping and filing vital statistics from the Ashtabula Wreck of 1876, or 73 years ago, have varied widely over the years and decades since.

Question About Fowler, Ind., Wreck.

This author questions the authenticity of the report of the January 19, 1907, wreck at Fowler, Ind., in which 29 lives were lost. See above list, 8th wreck listed. He has known Benton County, Ind., of which Fowler is the county seat, since he was a small boy. He has never heard of such a wreck. Certainly, if a wreck had occurred at Fowler, Ind., with 29 casualties, he would have known of it.

Furthermore, Thomas R. Johnston, Director of the News Bureau, Purdue University, who has been engaged in newspaper work and public relations in Indiana since 1910, writes this author that he has never heard of the Fowler wreck.

The Purdue Football Special Train Wreck.

The above list does not include the Purdue train wreck which occurred October 31, 1903, in the railroad yards of Indianapolis, when 16 members of the Purdue football squad and one other person were killed in the impact of two colliding trains.

Memorial Gymnasium, formerly used by men students at Purdue University, was erected in 1907 in memory of those who died in the wreck. This was perhaps the most serious railroad wreck in America in which University students were involved.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Ashtabula Wreck, December 29, 1876.

Few train wrecks have received more attention than the Ashtabula wreck on the Lake Shore Railway (LS&MS) now a part of the New York Central System, in December of 1876, in which 84 persons were killed either by the plunge of the train through the bridge or by the fire which broke out in the splintered cars at the bottom of the gorge. A short description of the bridge and the catastrophe was given in *Steel Across the Rivers*, January, 1948.

William B. Rainsford, Indian Head, Md., sent *Railroad Magazine* an extraordinary and, we believe, very rare book entitled *The Ashtabula Disaster*. The volume is without a title page and bears no author's or publisher's name on its worn binding. The writer states that he was a passenger on the first car of the ill-fated train. The *Register of Copyrights*, Washington, D. C., has informed us that a book of this title by Rev. Stephen D. Peet was copyrighted by J. M. Goodwin, February 20, 1877. Since the maximum period of copyright, 56 years, has expired, *Railroad* is at liberty to quote from *The Ashtabula Disaster*.

Near the depot which was a mile from the village of Ashtabula, in turn about two miles from Lake Erie, not 600 yards to the eastward, was a deep and lonely gorge. Under this, the ill-fated bridge, the Ashtabula River, 76 feet below road level, ran darkly. The only access to the gorge was by a long flight of stairs which was at the time of the calamity covered with a deep bank of snow. No road existed to it and the spot could be reached by teams, only as a track was broken through gardens and down steep banks and across the valley and along the stream.

A solitary building was in this gorge. It was the engine house. Here were the massive boiler and engine which were used for pumping water from the stream to the heights above, and so to the tanks at either end of the station house, in the distance. Situated close by the river, and almost under the shadow of the bridge itself, this lone house became to the wrecked travelers a refuge from the fire and storm. On the heights above towards the depot, another engine house was situated. It was the place where the Lake Erie, a hand fire engine, stood.

Two cisterns for the supply of water were located near, one on either side of the railroad track. It is difficult to picture a place more lonely than this gorge. Its distance from the village, and the nature of the surroundings will account for many things which occurred on that awful night.

The fatal, but far-famed bridge was located southward of the town, over the gorge described.

A grade on an arched viaduct conveyed the track to the abutments, but these stood by themselves, straight from the bottom of the gorge, two lofty pillars of stone 76 feet high and just wide enough for the two tracks of the road. Flanking these were the lower and smaller abutments of an older bridge, left standing, but, for a long time, unused. The span of the bridge across this gorge, from abutment to abutment, was the unusual length of 165 feet.

Trains Against the Sky.

Travelers by the wagon road, at a distance up the river a mile away, would stop and look at this structure, apparently built high in air, and watch the trains as they passed in bold relief against the sky, almost as if a spectre train were traversing the blue vault above. It (the bridge) was not an arch lifting high its springing sides, it was not a set of beams supported by abutments below; it was a web of iron netted and braced and bolted, heavy, dark and gloomy in appearance, and proving treacherous as death.

Construction of the Bridge.

This bridge was erected in 1865, by Joseph Tomlinson, according to orders and patterns given by Amasa Stone, then president of the road. It was built after the pattern of the Howe Truss, but containing some elements introduced by the president himself.

It was of wrought iron, with long iron braces from lower cord to upper cord, 20 feet in height. There were rods stretching from top to bottom, and designed to carry the strain from brace to brace. The panels were 11 feet long, and between these the strength of the cords depended on three iron beams six inches thick and eight inches wide. The whole width of the bridge was 19½ feet; its height 76 feet; its length, 165 feet, in a single span.

When it was first erected, it was discovered that the braces were placed wrong, so that they came upon the sides rather than upon the edges. The structure settled, as the edges were removed, about six inches, and necessitated the change of the process. This error was remedied by the cutting away of iron, so that the braces could be turned, and this change occupied nearly a year. It was watched with interest by the citizens, and was regarded by the builders themselves as a doubtful experiment.

In its erection Mr. Tomlinson, the engineer, differed with the president so much that he resigned his position, and even Charles Collins (engineer of the road) never acknowledged that it was a work of his inventing, or a bridge receiving his approval. Before the committee, appointed by the legislature of Ohio, he acknowledged that it was an "experiment," and even when it was in process of erection he gave no orders, but rather left the responsibility to the president.

Collins committed suicide soon after the wreck, due, it is alleged, to the horror he felt for what had occurred.

The deficiencies of the bridge, as later acknowledged by Mr. Tomlinson, were that the braces were smaller than was intended, and the weight was very great. The dead weight was 3,000 pounds to the square foot, making an aggregate mass of iron of many tons. The rods or braces had buckled or bent at the first trial, and there was danger that it would fall

by its own weight into the creek. As it was changed, however, and the braces sprang back, by the elasticity of the iron, heavier braces were put into it, and in this shape it stood for eleven years in constant service.

The Weather Conditions.

On the day of the wreck, snow had fallen all day long and was, at the dusk of night, still falling with blind fury. Everything was behind time. The train which was due at Erie at a little after noon, was two and a half late. It should have reached Ashtabula before sundown, and it was now dark, and the lamps had long been burning. Two strong locomotives were straining every nerve to overcome the deep snow.

A few of the passengers thought of danger as they looked out into the darkness of the night, but the sense of security pervaded the train. Suddenly the sound of the wheels was stopped; the bell-rope snapped; the lights were extinguished; and in an instant all felt themselves falling. An awful silence seized the passengers; each one sat breathless, bracing and seizing the seats behind or before them. Not a word was spoken; not a sound was heard—nothing except the fearful crash.

First Locomotive Across.

The bridge broke in the center. The engineer of the Socrates heard a sharp crack, like the report of a torpedo, and looked out and saw the engine behind sinking. With great presence of mind he opened the throttle valve an instant, and putting on all steam drove his engine forward. The Socrates reached the abutment and was safe. The Columbia, as it was drawn forward, struck the abutment and for an instant clung to its leader, held by the coupling rod, but as that broke, it fell. The first express car struck forward and downward, and landed at the foot of the abutment, while the locomotive fell onto it, completely reversed, with its headlight towards the train which it had been drawing. The

other express and two baggage cars also fell to the side of the bridge, forming a line across the chasm with the near baggage against the east abutment. The heavy iron bridge fell in the same instant with an awful crash, to the north, and lay, a great wall of iron rods and braces, ten feet high, across the gorge. Singularly enough the track and top of the bridge remained long enough "in situ" for the bridge to sink and sway away beneath and then fell straight down and lay at the bottom of the stream immediately below where it had rested before, but 76 feet down, in the midst of the ice and the snow and water of the stream. Upon this the first passenger coach landed in an upright position in the middle of the stream and to the left, but close by the wreck of the bridge.

The second passenger coach followed, but struck around at an angle, and turning on its side fell among the rods and braces, and was crushed and broken in the fall. The smoker broke its couplings at both ends, struck across and through the second passenger car, smashing it in its course, and then fell upon the first, crushing it down and killing many as it fell. The palace cars followed, but as they fell they leaped clear of the abutment and flew out into the air to the left of the bridge with their trucks hurled beneath them, and dropped 76 feet down and 80 feet out, and landed in the center of the chasm.

"Palace Cars" Into the Gorge.

The first drawingroom car Yokahama landed in the ice, and the sleeper Palatine beside it to the right. The sleeper City of Buffalo, however, as it flew through the air struck across the two, knocking the Yokahama on its side and crushing it in through its whole length, and landed on its forward end, with its rear end resting on the other two and high in the air.

As the cars struck, splinters flew in every direction. The floors burst up from below. The seats were crushed in front and behind. The roofs were

crushed from above. The sides opened and yawned; the crashing of one car on another struck many dead in an instant, while the survivors waited in suspense, expecting death would also come to them at the next blow. The thought of fire also rose in many minds, and the fear of a death that might be more dreadful than that by the crash.

Fire Perils Wrecked Passengers.

In the meantime, the flames began to rise. A few buckets of water thrown at this time would have sufficed. It was just a little flame on the east side underneath the sleeper. It was brighter in the smoker and in the heap near the bridge, but it spread from car to car and soon enveloped the whole.

"The flames ascended high and still higher. They filled the valley. A cloud of smoke ascended, too. It was black and dense and pitchy. It came from the paint and varnish, and the materials of that gilded wreck. It enveloped the ruins and darkened the sky and rolled a thick cloud through the awful gorge. . . "

Meanwhile the dreadful flames were lifting up their lurid light, and covering the ghastly scene with a sickening glare. The dead lay in every direction amid the driving snow. A skull lay by itself, amid a blackened heap, whitened by the fire. The heap of bodies lying in the sleeping coaches were still burning, and yet this appalling scene did not intimidate the human vultures who were looking for their prey.

Passengers Robbed.

One young man was suffering four broken ribs and a severe gash in the head. Someone had offered to assist him up the stairs. When he came to himself his purses and his ticket to California were both gone. Another gentleman was robbed of all that he had in his vest pocket, on the side towards the one who supported him. A young man who had a splinter from the cornice of the car driven through

his collarbone was robbed of \$300 where he lay.

At midnight, certain that all who were left in the wreck were dead, the citizens and village surgeons retired. The fire engines had already been ordered to their houses, leaving the wreck still burning, and the dead to be consumed. No effort was made to preserve these bodies for identification. Only the expressman guarding the treasures in the warped safe, sat solitary and alone through the long hours, while the flames crackled and threw their lurid light across the scene.

(From the first car, the author tells us in conclusion, more persons escaped than from any other, at least 16; and although he gives the names of all the survivors, including his own, does not identify himself by any particular. He thought that no one survived in the second car which was, he says, "well-filled with many ladies in it." Of the 16 persons in the smoking car, where the flames started from the stove, only five were killed. One person, a Mr. Ormsbee, of Boston, survived in the drawing room. The number of passengers in the Palatine, 17, is given, but not the number of those who survived.

Of the 21 people riding in the City of Buffalo, not one escaped except a Mr. Gage, of Illinois, who died of his injuries later. Five persons rode in the Oscea, the rear sleeper. Of these four, including the brakeman Stone, were unhurt; the colored porter was killed.

The editors of Railroad Magazine wish to thank Mr. Rainsford for allowing them to quote from this absorbing, eye-witness account of one of the most extraordinary of all railroad wrecks.)

The author of "Chatsworth Wreck" has permission of "Railroad Magazine" to use this interesting article. The Ashtabula Wreck preceded the Chatsworth Wreck by approximately 11 years.

Killed in the Ashtabula wreck were P. P. Bliss, famous gospel singer, and his wife. Bliss was enroute to Chicago to join Dwight L. Moody in old-time revival meetings. Bliss had left Syracuse, New York, the morning of the wreck.

Conclusion.

The Ashtabula Wreck, December 29, 1876, has many similarities to the Chatsworth Wreck of August 10-11, 1887.

Each wreck occurred at a bridge. The Ashtabula Wreck occurred when a lofty viaduct over a small river collapsed, precipitating the train to the chasm 76 feet below. The Chatsworth Wreck was the result of an excursion train striking a burning culvert across a tiny stream which any sturdy lad could clear in one leap.

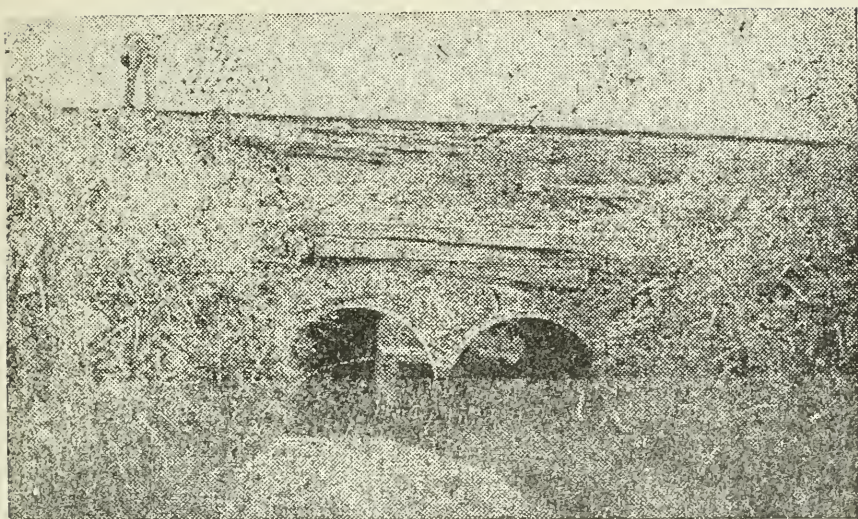
In each wreck there were two locomotives drawing the train. In each case, the first locomotive leaped across the falling bridge, whether major in the case of the Ashtabula Wreck, or trivial, as at Chatsworth. Each locomotive lost its tender as support fell below its even then massive weight.

Each wreckage caught fire. Injured or "wounded" passengers were tortured with horrible death or suffering from flames, as well as injuries from the wreck itself.

Weather conditions, however, were at opposite extremes of the year. The Ashtabula Wreck occurred in the depth of winter, with snow covering the ground, temperatures 15 below zero. The Chatsworth Wreck was in "the good old summer time," with no distress from cold, but worry and suffering from pain.

In each wreck, of course, there was much talk of the responsibility of railroad officials. As far as can be ascertained at this late date, no one was held legally responsible for the Ashtabula wreck, other than a hearing before the Ohio legislature.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN—CONCLUSION



And Now—The Site of the Chatsworth Wreck in 1949. Two Drain Tile Have Replaced the Old Timber Bridge.

The wreck could not have occurred in a more remote locality in Central Illinois. Yet so much was done for humanity—with so little to do with and with so few to aid. Like the woman who anointed the Saviour—"She hath done what she could." The people of Chatsworth and neighboring communities did what they could.

A Lonely Area.

This author has visited the site of the famous Chatsworth Wreck three miles east of the thriving town of Chatsworth, Ill.

The area is rural indeed. There are only the usual farmhouses hither and thither and yon across the rich, fertile Illinois prairie. Doubtless, the approximate number of farm houses is about the same today as in 1887.

There are no large towns near the site of the wreck. Chatsworth is to the west; Piper City, to the east. Peoria is approximately 70 miles to the west. Bloomington, Ill., about 50 miles to the southwest. One must travel as

far north as Kankakee, Ill., to find a sizeable city, and as far south as Champaign-Urbana, to locate a large center in that direction.

The Chatsworth Wreck occurred in a typically rural area in a typically Central Western agricultural state. The miracle of it all is that so much was done for the victims of the wreck as was performed by the comparatively few persons in the immediate neighborhood. The next day, however, brought crowds. Many who came on sight-seeing expeditions, remained to nurse the injured.

Accidents—Not for Us.

"It Can't Happen Here" is the title with which the brilliant Sinclair Lewis entitled one of his novels.

We all believe the accident will happen to the other fellow. Smith or Jones may be killed or injured in an automobile accident or in a plane crash — but not ourselves. In other words, it might happen to Smith but not to us. The T., P. & W. excursion

train to Niagara Falls was wrecked with a staggering toll of life, limb and property, but the Lake Erie and Western special, of comparable length and weight, made the trip without ruffling an eyebrow for any one passenger. Again, we make the observation—human nature does not change much—from the days of King Solomon to the period of President Harry S. Truman. Things always happen to the other chap—not to us.

Whether the wreck could have been avoided is too momentous a problem to be solved 62 years after it happened. Probably no person, regardless of his ability, could make a responsible solution today of the problem of the guilt. There was blundering, of course — or the wreck would not have occurred.

But today, this writer is concerned only with the tragedy as an historical episode, one of the most spectacular in the annals of American railroading. The story is here given to the American public both as a chapter in American railroad administration and in American life. And it is the latter—the rollicking excursion crowds, riding the rails to Niagara Falls or to some other gala event or scene, in which we are primarily interested in this narrative.

American history is, after all, the history of its people. We have attempted, in this study, to present the travel life of 1887, or three score years ago, as dramatically and, above all, as truthfully, and as carefully as possible.

Motor Tourist Visits Chatsworth.

During the summer of 1949 a long-distance motorist, driving on U. S. Route 24, went into Chatsworth, and seeking facts about the wreck, was directed to Mr. Haberkorn's store.

"I lived in Illinois when I was a boy. Now I live in California. As an urchin, I naturally heard people talking about the famous Chatsworth Wreck. I remembered much they said

about the catastrophe. Then we moved to California. I never supposed I would ever be in Chatsworth, Ill. But on looking over maps last night, I saw the word 'Chatsworth' on the route ahead of me. I decided then and there to pause a few moments in Chatsworth and to learn what I could about the famous wreck."

If this motorist should see this volume and note this episode of his brief call in Chatsworth in the summer of 1949, it would be a pleasure for the author to hear from him.

MEMORIES FROM THE GOLDEN YEARS OF YESTERDAY

The period of the 1900s and the "19-teens," at least until the entry of beloved America into the First World War in 1917, has been designated as "The Golden Era" or, at least a "Golden Era" in the history of the Central West and indeed, of the United States.

In those now gone-forever years, American people, by and large, lived "at home." They ate at home. There were few, if any, week-end trips. Week-ends, as now recognized, did not exist. Our oldsters, in those years, did not "eat out," in the custom of 1950. They did not patronize country clubs, night clubs, taverns, drug-stores, hotels, cafeterias, other types of public eating-places in the frequency of 1949 and 1950. People really lived "at home." "Company"—and there was plenty of it — was entertained "at home."

Mother was equal to the occasion—she had to be. More "leaves" or "leafs" were added to the spacious dining-table. Mother could care for an extra six or sixteen for Sunday dinner or Christmas dinner—and she did.

Talk was good. It was also long. There was little to do Sunday afternoons or holiday afternoons. Conversation centered about the Civil War. Veterans were living, surviving, by the hundreds. They loved to recount Pickett's famous charge at Gettysburg,

how Sherman captured Atlanta and how Union troops, even in spite of contrary orders from General Grant, stormed and took Lookout Mountain.

It was a "heartly age." The greatness of America was constantly emphasized in those Sunday afternoon talks. The "War" was over—referring to the Civil War, of course. Lincoln had preserved the nation, had saved the Union. There would never be another war, as far as America was concerned. Even the brief interlude of the Spanish-American war, a summer campaign in 1898, only proved this point. Spain had been soundly "licked." America could do that to all and sundry nations. Besides, no other foreign nation would ever dare to "jump on" America. Chautauqua speakers, like William Jennings Bryan, assured us that America was "safe," that no country would ever dare attack us. There would be no more wars for stalwart old Uncle Sam. We were jolted out of this idea in 1917 and again in 1941.

We were living in what was called a fool's paradise in those golden years of the fading Victorian period. The cost of living was largely ignored. "Company" cost but little, with Mother and Grandmother preparing bountiful feasts at little or no recognized cost.

Besides the Civil War, our elders discussed politics, of course, the growing menace of Bryan and the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1—if they were Republicans. They delighted in assuring voters, if they were Democrats, of the good times in store, with "plenty of money" under Bryan's suggested Utopian dreams.

People also discussed the Chicago Fire, the Johnstown Flood, the Chatsworth Wreck. And there is where "we" came in. "We" who were decidedly "juniors" in those golden years, heard much of the Chatsworth Wreck

at those Sunday or holiday repasts, and especially in those quiet Sunday afternoons when older people "talked." In those years, children were supposed to be seen, not heard.

But we listened. Youngsters have "big ears," as the old saying ran. As in the Scriptures, we had ears and we heard. Moreover, many of us, including the writer—who has been ascribed a card-index memory, now quoting his friend, the late George Ade — heard and remembered. Little did our grandparents, our uncles and aunts, our parents, our elderly friends and guests—whom we considered "old" at 50 or 60, when we were 10—imagine that we were treasuring these talks in our hearts—like the Virgin Mary of old—and that some day, these old-time Sunday after-dinner talks might crystallize into real history, as we have attempted to do in this treatise.

America may never see again those blissful years when many of us who read these pages were "young," perhaps children, boys, girls, youths, in that halcyon period preceding the first tragedy of the First World War. Those years are doubtless gone forever. America, in all probability, will never revert to those quiet years of the 1890s and the wee 1900s.

But from those steady years, when we, as juveniles and as high school youngsters, were assured that our world was established forever—without wars and major changes — there emerged a stream of memories which we have the urge to record before it is forever too late.

One of these books is this review of "The Chatsworth Wreck" in which we have sought to record, especially, the life of the people in the 1880s, and, as a carryover, into the "Nineties" and "The Turn of the Century."

The Chatsworth Wreck was related and retold in Central Illinois homes, for many years. From these discussions, this author, as a child, a boy,

a youth, carried memories, which we are now recording as one of our many contributions to the history of this Central West into which we were born and in which we have constantly lived.

SALUTATIONS AND GREETINGS TO AMERICAN RAILROADS

Without in any way seeking to give details of any other major or minor railroad tragedy, the author of this volume desires to salute the American Railroads, their personnel, their trainmen, their maintenance groups.

Wrecks have occurred, happily, in only a few scattering and isolated cases. Millions of passengers have been transported and millions of tons of freight moved with entire safety. The safest place, after all, may be on a train. Mistakes have occurred, of course, and errors, even gross errors, have occurred. The same may be said of disasters on highways, on waterways, and in the air. To travel, at any time, in any manner, means the assumption of perils, disasters, even that certain rendezvous with Death.

If this volume, portraying the dangers of rail transportation, with no less emphasis upon highway, waterway and air traveling, has achieved even a minor contribution to the vast topic of "Safety," then the writer will feel amply repaid for his time and labor.

We can only repeat, at the conclusion, as at the beginning, the warning which should be displayed not only in every railroad station, but certainly in every filling station and service station, in every bus and truck terminal, in every dock and wharf landing, in every airport — **ALWAYS BE CAREFUL.**

ADDENDA

**Mark Twain's Love Letters Published;
One Written From T., P. & W. Railside.**

"The Love Letters of Mark Twain," edited by Dixon Wector and published by Harper & Brothers, New York, was announced in the book-review sections of metropolitan newspapers, Sunday, November 20, 1949, after this book on

"The Chatsworth Wreck" was in press.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens and Olivia Langdon were married at Elmira, New York, February 2, 1870. He was soon to be universally known and esteemed as "Mark Twain," she as his beloved wife, "Livy."

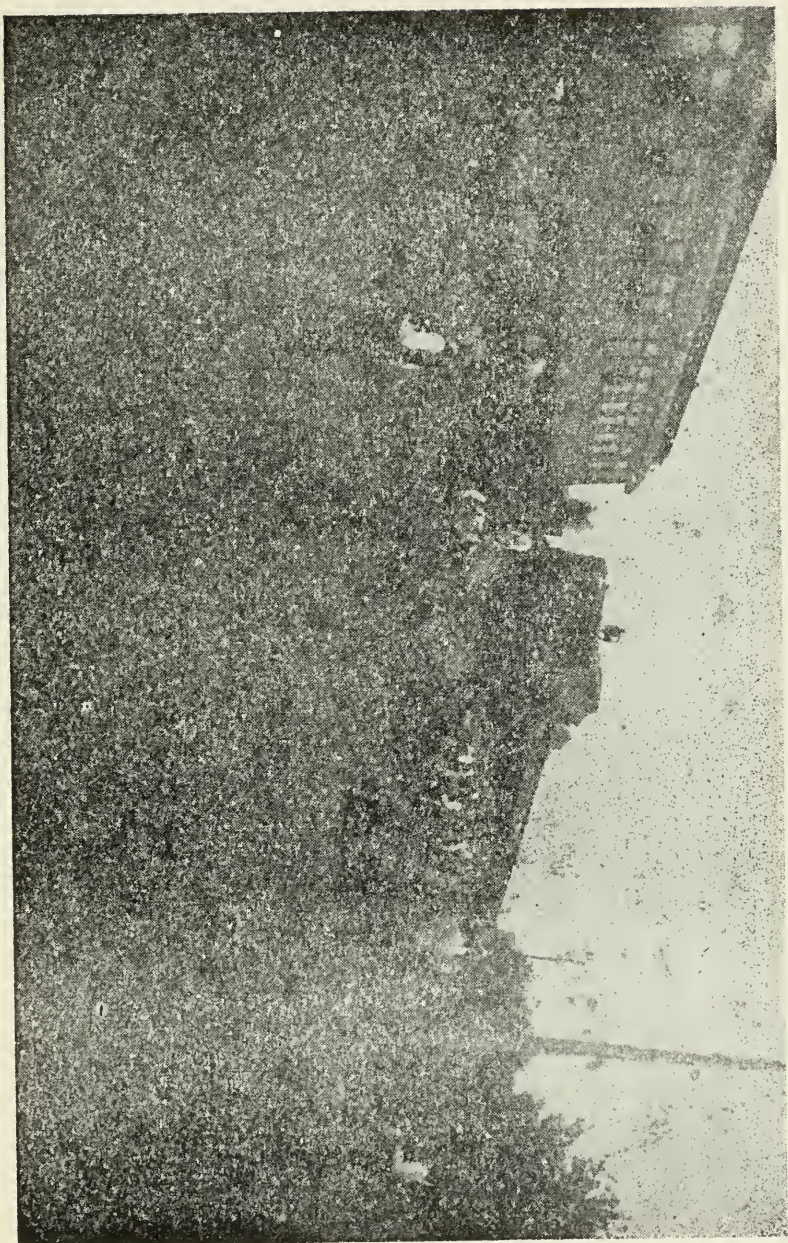
One of these letters, at least, was written from railside of the T., P. & W. in Illinois. See comment by Cashier Cassell P. Kingdon, Woodford County National Bank, El Paso, Ill., furnishing the valuable information that Clemens, or Mark Twain, wrote one of these wonderful love letters from the old Campbell House, El Paso, Ill. Twain was lecturing in the Central West and was overnight at this then well-known station and tavern. He was deeply in love with his "Livy." He wrote her some of the world's finest love letters—these are now published. One, at least, was written within sound of whistles and bells of the T., P. & W. railroad not many years preceding "The Chatsworth Wreck."

L. J. HABERKORN, CHATSWORTH LEADER, RETIRES

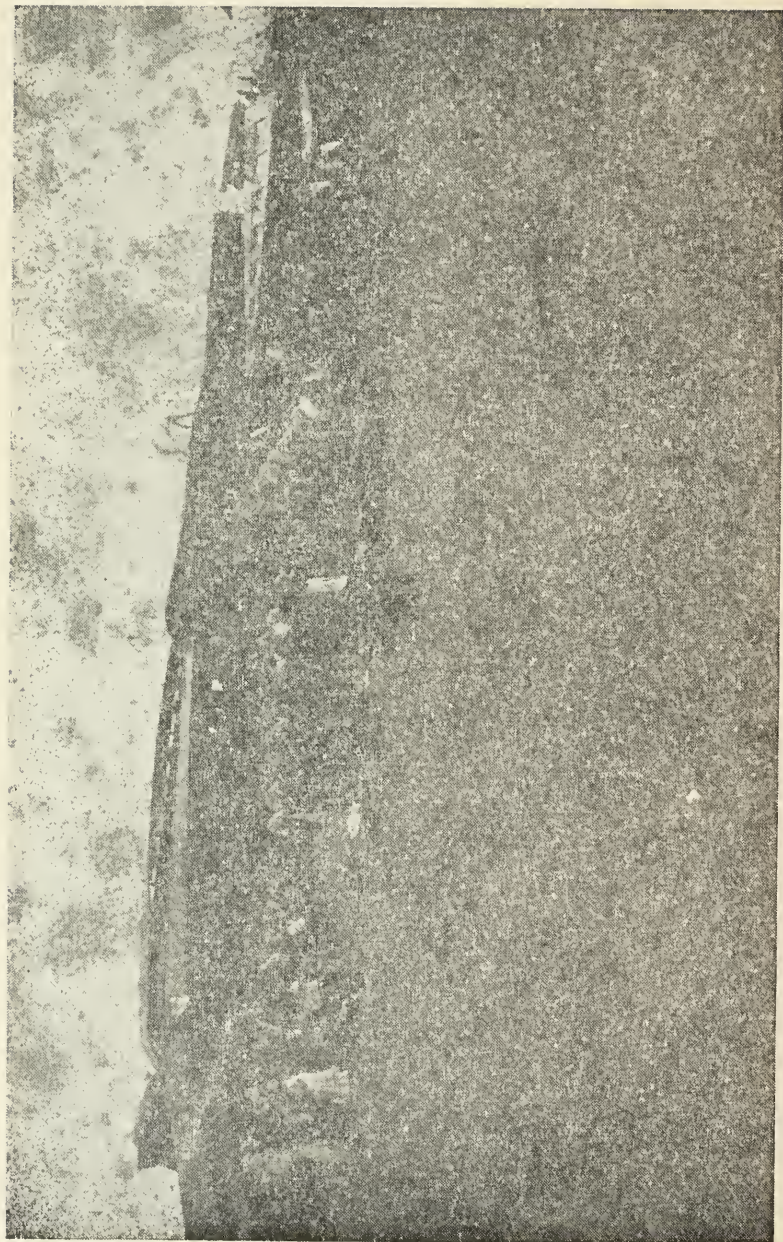
As this volume on "The Chatsworth Wreck" goes to press, we have noted the retirement from active business, as of November 22, 1949, of L. J. Haberkorn, oldest business man, both in point of years of service and of age, in Chatsworth.

Mr. Haberkorn had been in business in Chatsworth for 67 years. His story of first aid to the people marooned in the terrible railroad wreck is fully detailed in this book. Suffice the matter to add a word of tribute to Mr. Haberkorn, as he was most generous in supplying the author of this volume with historical data and with pictures.

He was active in many community enterprises in Chatsworth and organized, and served as the first president, of the Community Club of Chatsworth. He is now past 83 years of age and is regarded as one of the real civic leaders of his town. He has been especially helpful in the preparation of this volume and we wish to thank him for his great spirit of cooperation.



The above picture and the one on the following page were found in the files of the Fairbury Blade just as this volume was going to press. We are including them, as there are so few pictures of the Wreck that we feel that all available cuts should be shown.



RAILROAD SAFEST MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

Once more, we present, in pictorial form, another view of the wreckage, as a photographer of the long ago was able to catch it with his ponderous "picture-taking" machine, which was, indeed, far removed, both in size and dexterity, from the sleek, pocket-size kodaks of today. It took a real man, in the 1880s, to transport his photographic paraphernalia to the site of a disaster.



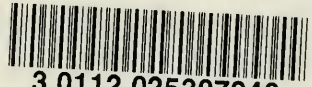
Gaylord

PAMPHLET BINDER

Syracuse, N. Y.

Stockton, Calif.

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THE CHATSWORTH WRECK, A SAGA OF EXCURSION



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